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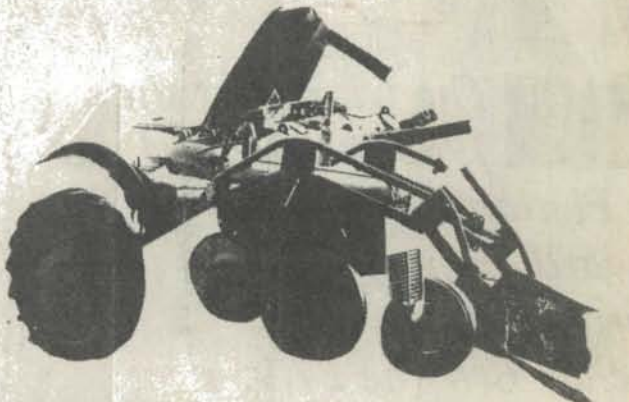

TRACTORS

How to cut defence spending and still save jobs

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New Statesman

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Cover montage: Peter Kennard

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New Statesman

Vol 107 No 2768 6 April 1984

Uncommon Greenham

THERE IS AN arresting moment in David Edgar's play *Maydays* when he presents us, at the start of a scene, with a towering barricade of concrete posts, steel mesh and barbed wire. Where are we? It could be the prison for Soviet dissidents in the Siberia of an earlier scene; perhaps the Berlin wall; or even the concentration camp of a fascist tyranny? But no, it is Greenham, in 'home counties' Britain; and the posts and rolls of wire — all the symbols of people oppressed by government — are staked into *our* land. Who is the barricade controlling?

It is part of the inside-out world that the Greenham women have shown to us that it is the representatives of government, of hierarchy, of law and order who are trapped *inside* the wire; and the free-moving dissidents who, pinioned only by their beliefs, stay *outside*. There is no doubt, that despite this week's evictions, women will stay at Greenham. They have been moved off before, most notably in May 1982. Accounts of the subsequent trial, printed in a forthcoming book *Greenham Common Women at the Wire**, bring home the entirely disruptive effect that the anarchic women of Greenham have on the process of law and order.

'My colleague said he merely held the warrant and had his orders to carry out. He was giving the ladies these instructions as he had been told to do.'
(Humming swells.)
Bailiff continues: '. . . It wasn't for us to decide what was what. My colleague reminded the ladies that his job was simply to obey orders.'
(Sniggers from the public gallery.)
Bailiff again: 'This kind of reaction is quite unusual . . . we move gypsies . . . Whilst we were carrying out our duty, the young ladies followed us around carrying something and singing . . .

And so on. The women moved back and carried on singing, the bailiffs continued to try to construct some meaning out of these ladies / turned gypsies / turned lawbreakers. The women were prepared for the eviction on Wednesday morning and have merely moved to the sidelines to wait for the hundreds of police to move away. Newbury Council, or Thames Valley police, or the Ministry of Transport, or the Ministry of Defence, or the government as a whole, or the US air force will either have tacitly to accept the presence of women on parts of the common land at Greenham, acting only to check conspicuous nuisance or obstruction; or they will have to turn the police force into a civilian army, permanently deployed in the area to prevent any women — who can tell which ones belong to the 'enemy'? — from straying into the area. At this point, the full absurdity of having cruise missiles on our land ostensibly to protect the ancient British freedoms from foreign tyranny should become apparent even to those who at present seem to find a crowd of unkempt women a greater threat.

What has most distressed the government is that so many of their secret steps on the road to deploying cruise have been monitored and made public. This is perhaps the Greenham women's principal contribution to democracy — indeed of all those in peace camps observing what is going on in airforce bases.

Part of the threat posed by the Greenham women is precisely to the links between law and order and masculinity. The soldier is the archetype of the 'real man' — and how can he be a 'real man', protecting the weak and vulnerable, if the women refuse to behave like 'real women'? The absolute discipline and hierarchy of life in the armed forces is continuously mocked by a political movement which has no hierarchy and no proper leaders. It is a sorry thing that Newbury Council and its ratepayers — who in 1951 so bitterly opposed the land from which the women were evicted passing into the control of the Ministry of Defence — should now find the women and all they represent more threatening than the USAF base and cruise missiles. It is also a sorry mark of the subservience of Tory local authorities to central government that Newbury District Council, which bought the land for common use in 1938, should have become the agent of the Ministry of Defence, the Department of Transport and the USAF in ensuring that the common land once again serves military purposes. □

*Greenham Common: Women at the wire, *Edited by Barbara Harford and Sarah Hopkins, to be published in June by The Women's Press, £3.95.*

PM's statement

MRS THATCHER is clearly not going to come clean about the Oman story. The reason is now clear enough. Her conduct throughout has been less than candid and below the standard that has come to be expected of ministers.

Brian Sedgemore MP spelled out the story in his evidence to the Commons Select Committee on Members' Interests, but the Tory chairman refused to publish it. We give it in its entirety on page 17. The full statement that Mrs Thatcher should make but never will runs something like this.

'When I went to Oman in 1981 I knew from my son Mark that he was closely connected with a Mr Jamil Amyuni, who represented Cementation in the Middle East. (In fact Mr Amyuni had come to the constituency dinner to celebrate my 21 years as MP for Finchley only the previous October.) We were also well informed about Oman because of my son's business and personal friendship with Brigadier Landon, who had helped the present Sultan stage a palace coup against his father in 1970 and who has remained the Sultan's trusted confidant ever since. I, therefore, knew that Cementation were actively pursuing the Oman contract, which had not been put out to general tender. I also knew that my son was planning to be in Oman at the time of my visit, lobbying for Cementation. I mentioned this to the Sultan and expressed the hope that he would be well received.

'I now understand that concern was expressed by officials in Oman that my conduct and the presence of my son could correctly be open to the inference that I was mixing official and family business. In retrospect I can see that it would have been better for me either to have declared to the House that my son had an interest in the Oman contract, or to have asked him not to come to Oman. Accordingly, I apologise to the House.' □

EASTER ADVERTISEMENT DEADLINES

Because of Bank Holiday disruption to our publication schedules our advertisement booking and copy deadlines for the issue of **20 April** have had to be advanced by 24 hours:

DISPLAY COPY DEADLINE — Noon Friday 13 April.

CLASSIFIED COPY DEADLINE — Noon Monday 16 April.

Ring the Advertisement Dept. on 01-253 2001 for details.

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Navy's new ship has roll problem

HMS PEACOCK, the first of a new class of patrol boat designed by the Admiralty's Ship Department nearly turned turtle on one of its first outings and consequently the Royal Navy has refused to accept delivery of the ship. The Navy's action is unprecedented and is particularly embarrassing in view of the history of the design which is currently the subject of a court action.

Insiders within the Navy suspected something was wrong when *HMS Peacock* failed to make an appearance at last autumn's Royal Navy Equipment Exhibition at Portsmouth where plenty of clients would have been on hand to see Britain's latest offering in this booming market. *Peacock* is the first new design of patrol boat for years and it is intended to be used in Hong Kong.

The new ship's problem is its roll. On a trip up the Irish Sea, it rolled 57 degrees over in one direction, followed by over 40 degrees in the other in moderate weather. Not only is this extremely uncomfortable for the crew, it is also very close to the point of no return. Given a sudden surge of sea on the beam at the wrong moment, she could have turned right over.

News of the problem came in an otherwise flattering review of the ship in a recent issue of the journal *The Naval Architect*. The magazine's editor, Michael Wake, was on board during the cruise up the Irish Sea. Wake's mild comment on this degree of roll is that 'it is the editor's opinion that large bilge keels, a skeg (a rib along the keel) or perhaps even stabilisiers will be retrofitted to *Peacock* and the follow on vessels modified accordingly.' But such modifications are his only criticisms of an otherwise excellent design. '*Peacock* makes her design speed with comfort and is excellent in head seas, as well as carrying a good load,' he concludes.

But modifications along the lines suggested would land the Navy with another problem. Already naval architects have commented on the similarity of the *Peacock* design to the independent Thornycroft Giles (TG) patrol boat design over which there has been a considerable battle. The TG patrol boat design was rejected on the grounds of its short fat hull shape which the Navy said was unsuitable. But *Peacock*'s distinctive wedge-shaped beam looks remarkably like TG's design. Apart from the roll, it behaves like it too: better than expected speed for power ratios, good ability to carry weight and a solid performance in head seas.

Wake's suggested addition of a skeg and flared topsides to dampen the roll would turn *Peacock* into a very useful ship but the problem is that it would then look exactly like TG's design. And that would be embarrassing at a time when Thornycroft Giles is pursuing a court action against the Navy and British Shipbuilders claiming copyright piracy.

The Navy's refusal to accept *Peacock* has been blamed on the ship's engine manufacturer, a GEC subsidiary called Crossley Pielstick. *Peacock*'s engines, hardly surprisingly, broke down when subjected to such roll angles. They had been designed to tolerate up to 35 degrees of roll: the extra caused metal fatigue and thus breakdowns. Crossley is hardly happy at being asked to carry the can in this way but as a good MoD supplier it has decided to shut up and lump it.

Peacock will probably go back to its builders — Hall Russell of Aberdeen — for modifications. At the same time the other ships of the *Peacock* class now being built at Hall Russell will be redesigned. This is expected to lead to a considerable cost overrun and late delivery. It is thought that the whole contract for Hong Kong will now be completed at least 45 weeks late — if Peking hasn't moved in by the time they're ready, that is.

Philip Geddes

Tories hush official critics

THE TORIES' proposal to abolish the big city councils has met with such widespread opposition that the government is refusing to disclose the official comments of many national bodies.

Normally responses to consultation documents are placed in the House of Commons library. This the government has refused to do. Instead it has published a list of organisations which have responded to its transport and planning consultation documents — without saying whether they oppose the proposals or not.

However, the government has 'forgotten' to even list many of the organisations that have replied. For instance, the Department of Transport's list leaves out submissions from the National Waterways Transport Association, the British Aggregate Construction Materials Industry (both of which are trade associations) and joint responses from public transport users' groups and transport planners in the six metropolitan counties. The opposition to the government's plans covers a broad spectrum of interests and politics.

The Royal Town Planning Institute: *the plans are 'hasty, ill-conceived, ineffective and inefficient'.*

The British Aggregate Construction Materials Industry: *abolition is 'a retrograde step'.*

The House Builders Federation: *'The prospect of individual district councils preparing structure plans. . . is appalling.'*

The Countryside Commission: *the plans 'pose a long-term threat to the . . .green belts.'*

The Royal Institute of British Architects: *it is 'a return to the sort of arrangements deemed inadequate to cope with the urban problems of the railway age.'*

The National Waterways Transport Association: *the result will be 'indecision, delay and increased bureaucracy'.*

The Automobile Association: *'a strategic county-wide approach is an absolute necessity'.*

Mick Hamer

Both photos: Blackfriars Photographic Project

The offending Mrs T

What's the difference between these two effigies of Mrs Thatcher? One is apparently illegal, the other one's not. The one on the left was paraded on the streets of London as part of the Democracy Day demonstration on 29 March and met with no reaction from the police. However, members of Southwark Against Government Attacks (SAGA) were not allowed to display the other effigy on their local streets. Roger Clews of SAGA told the New Statesman: *'We were doing a tour of the area in a van collecting signatures for our petition. When we stopped and brought Mrs T out to attract people to our stall, a sergeant in the police van following behind told us that displaying the effigy would be causing a breach of the peace.' Clews was threatened with arrest if he didn't put Mrs T back in the van because, according to the sergeant, it was insulting. After some discussion, he did so. A complaint has been lodged with the police.*

Christian Wolmar

Secret plans to stymie strikers

HEALTH SERVICE bosses in Cornwall are planning to make it impossible for unions to provide accident or emergency cover in future industrial action. Instead, the health authority plans to rely on untrained volunteers to replace workers taking action.

Confidential notes of a working party set up by the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly District Health Authority to study its response to industrial action have been obtained by the *New Statesman*.

During the seven-month pay campaign of 1982, health unions successfully picketed Cornwall's main stores depot and effectively controlled the supply of drugs and essential equipment to hospitals. The notes, written by the health authority's personnel officer Mike Fernley, make it clear this will not be tolerated in future.

Mr Fernley's working party sees privatisation of the health service as an incentive to lower wage settlements. 'Staff are aware that taking strike action in respect of an extra percentage point to two on a wage claim will provide impetus to the introduction of privatisation. . . The trade unions assume (correctly) that once a health authority has dismantled its labour force it is unlikely to re-establish it, even if the quality of the service provided by the private contractors proves to be sub-standard.'

But the blinkered view of the all-male working party means they have left an important loophole at Cornwall's Central Sterilising Supplies Depot, where 'the labour force is predominantly female and the willingness of the staff to enter into a long drawn out dispute is questionable.'

Graham Smith

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Nuclear plants push up prices

THE MAIN cause of the high electricity price rises which came into effect in Scotland this week is the capital cost of the new nuclear power station currently being built at Torness in East Lothian. A confidential report prepared by the South of Scotland Electricity Board (SSEB) and obtained by the *New Statesman*, reveals that interest charges due to capital investment in Torness are expected to increase by 23 per cent in the coming financial year.

The report, presented earlier this year to the South of Scotland Electricity Consultative Council, discloses that interest payments are expected to rise by £34.2 million (from £147.7 to £181.9 million) between 1983-84 and 1984-85. It makes clear that this is by far the most important reason for the SSEB's average price increase of 4.4 per cent — more than double the expected increase in England and Wales.

The SSEB defends the increase by pointing out that it is below the rate of inflation and stressing that prices in Scotland are still lower than south of the border. The Board argues that the high capital cost of Torness (estimated at £1,100 million in 1980 prices and not updated since) will benefit consumers in the long run.

The South of Scotland Consultative Council which (unlike its equivalent in London, the Electricity Consumers' Council) has tended to act as an apologist for the Board, has for the first time objected to the proposed increases. And the Scottish Fuel Poverty Action Group's convenor Claire Simpson said: 'It is astonishing, when the SSEB has nearly twice the capacity it needs to supply electricity in Scotland, that Torness should have even been proceeded with in the first place.'

Rob Edwards

● An electricity board has won the first case against a householder who withheld a portion of his electricity bill to protest at the high cost — both in terms of finance and safety — of the nuclear power programme. But Dr Brian John is considering appealing against the ruling that he must pay the South Wales Electricity Board the £52.09 he owes. He also has the option of taking the issue to the High Court, as the Welsh County Court judge recommended that it was a matter for judicial review.

● And Britain's first legal appeal for household rates to be reduced because trains carrying nuclear waste pass nearby was rejected last week. Rate assessment officers said they were worried that if Michael Cashman's case was upheld, hundreds of thousands of other ratepayers would follow suit. But in Texas, land taxes have been reduced and in France council rents have been cut after residents complained about the proximity of nuclear waste trains. A tenants association in Stratford, North East London, is planning a similar appeal soon.

MISCELLANY

Barbers but no beards

It has not escaped the notice of commentators that Neil Kinnock is surrounded by bearded men. Robin Cook, Frank Dobson, Nigel Stanley, that sort of person. This raises the possibility of there being a cabinet minister with a beard in the not too distant future. The *NS* has to plan its coverage in advance, so it is essential that we know who the last bearded

cabinet minister was. Weeks of ceaseless toil in the *NS* research department have failed to come up with the answer. It's up to you.

Only insofar as. . .

Forget about the fuss about the Panorama programme: are there racists in the Tory party or not? Ian Fotheringham is a Conservative councillor and chairperson of the Camberley St Michaels Conservative Association. John Selwyn Gummer will be interested to read an article written by him in the *Camberley News and Mail* on 16 March. It reads: 'The writer has been described as a "racist". He is only a racist insofar as he believes that the English attitudes which preserve our freedom are a genetic inheritance. If the Anglo-Saxon is unique in his particular variation of northern independence, and that inheritance is genetic, it follows that the invasion of alien peoples we have endured since the last war must threaten our national character. The writer's fear is that the change in our racial composition as a nation may already have gone too far.' Fotheringham was 'administratively suspended' from the Monday Club earlier this year, but has since been allowed back into the fold. He has not been expelled by the Conservative Party, except briefly in 1974 — for voting Liberal.

Another riddle

When is a subsidy not a subsidy? When it's a handout to the rich. Transport secretary Nicholas Ridley, interviewed in this month's *Railway Gazette,* was asked whether the railways suffer unfair competition from company cars. The minister replied: 'I do not accept the view that company cars are subsidised'. Tax relief on company cars amounts to about £2,000 million a year. British Rail's subsidy in 1983 was £819 million.

Troublesome bent

If you've got a moment, the Chief Constable of Warwickshire would just like to clarify why one of his officers obtained from a local newspaper a photograph of demonstrators, mostly Labour Party members, at a visit by Norman Fowler to a Rugby hospital. 'As successive governments have made clear, the police do have a responsibility for the preservation of the Queen's Peace and in view of problems in recent times, on the occasion of ministerial visits it is of interest to us in Warwickshire to know if anarchists and subversives bent on causing trouble are coming into the county with the intention of using local demonstrations for their own ends and thus putting the maintenance of law and order at risk.' Having said this, in a letter to the local Labour Party, Chief Constable Peter Joslin acknowledges that the demonstration was a peaceful one, 'entirely local in nature, and the action of the officer concerned was really ill-conceived and not at all necessary. I have arranged for him to be advised accordingly'. The local Labour Party has arranged for Joslin to be advised that it wants to know how he knows that the people involved in the demonstration were local, and whether its members are allowed out of the county to support, for example, CND rallies in London.

No flagging

The Office of the Thai National Cultural Board has concluded its study into how government officials and the general public pay their respects to the national flag. We have spared no expense to provide a translation of the results, published in a recent issue of *Thai News,* issued by the Royal Thai Embassy. 'As regards the time devoted to paying respects to the national flag, the province which spent most time on this is Surin province, followed by Surat Thani, Mae Hong Son, Phrae and Chumphorn respectively. As regards standing to attention while paying respects to the national flag it was found that Greater Bangkok practised this best, followed by Nakorn Rachasima, Udorn Thani and Sri Saket respectively. The Office of the National Cultural Board draws these conclusions from questionnaires, of which 33.09 per cent were returned. The Office will conduct a similar study this year.' *Thai News* is not for Western consumption: we usually get the story that the new liberal régime left this sort of fascistic nonsense behind in 1976.

Doling it out

It's going to get tougher on the unemployed and that's official. The Department of Employment runs training courses for its special claims investigators. Apparently, books on police and military interrogation techniques are now required reading for these courses, so much so that the library can't cope with demand and is having to buy more.

Don't bank on it

Many weeks ago we reported that the Youth Hostels Association was sending Barclays Bank propaganda to members who protested about the organisation's banking with Barclays, because of its South African links (*NS* 24 February). That, it seems, is only part of the story. Not only does the YHA bank with Barclays, but all its regional organisations have recently transferred their accounts to Barclays. The reason given has been 'efficiency'. A mere coincidence, then, that the national chairman of the THA, Hedley Alcock, works for Baric Computing Services, a joint venture between Barclays Bank and ICL.

Additional data

Few people know this, but the most boring list in the world is the weekly list of documents submitted to the inquiry into the planned Sizewell B nuclear power station, full of things like 'estimated core-average fuel-clad inventory of stable fission gases'. This week, however, it included the following item, submitted by Dunn, D. on behalf of the Stop Sizewell B Association: 'SSBA/S/78 (GEN). Iced representation to Sir Frank Layfield QC on day 100. (In marzipan, mixed fruit, flour and icing sugar.) 8½ lbs of additional material.'

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Union on the line

THE EXECUTIVE of the National Union of Journalists is to defy the House of Lords and give its official support to the strike at Dimbleby newspapers in southwest London. It has taken the union's executive four weeks to make the decision which will put union funds at risk of being swallowed up in fines for contempt of court. The law lords upheld the injunction granted to David Dimbleby, reiterating the findings of the lower courts that the strike at Dimbleby newspapers is illegal secondary industrial action.

Journalists on the *Richmond and Twickenham Times* and its three sister papers walked out on 17 October last year after being told the papers were going to be printed at TBF printers, part of the anti-union group T Bailey Forman with which the NUJ has been in dispute since 1979.

The NUJ was only allowed to take its appeal to the law lords if it withdrew its official backing for the strike. Since December, the Dimbleby journalists — there are eight left out of the original 13 as four have got other jobs and one gone back to work — have survived on voluntary contributions and donations.

The decision to give the strike official sanction leaves the way open to Dimbleby to start proceedings for contempt of court. As there is no limit to the amount in fines for contempt — the National Graphical Association's battle in Warrington cost the union around £2 million — the union could be bankrupted. Attempts have been made to salt away NUJ funds where they can't be traced by the sequestrators, but the union has not been able to sell its main asset — the headquarters in Gray's Inn Road.

It is now up to Dimbleby to move against the union. So far, he has won all the rounds. All the court cases have gone his way and he defeated the union's attempt to prevent him presenting the BBC's budget programme. But the NUJ may not lose the war. A strike ruled as outside the law by the courts is still going strong after almost six months even though the union has had to disown its members.

And Dimbleby may not want to bankrupt the NUJ when he has to work closely with so many members of that union at the BBC.

Geraldine Hackett

Libyans get tough with union

ARAB JOURNALISTS internationally are being asked to boycott copy from the Libyan news agency JANA as the dispute over the reinstatement of its London NUJ members hots up.

JANA's assistant director Omar Farhat has reportedly threatened journalist Abdul Latif Jaber that 'it only takes one bullet' when he complained that a fellow colleague has been unfairly dismissed and several others had been due their wages for over a month. Another three workers were sacked for protesting at the dismissal, and the four other NUJ (National Union of Journalists) members have since come out in support.

The NUJ is particularly furious with the threats which Farhat has made, especially as the police have revealed that he has diplomatic immunity and cannot be prosecuted. According to NUJ official Jacob Ecclestone: 'It's bad enough that they are terrible employers but it is beyond the pale that they can threaten our members with murder and be protected by diplomatic immunity. Surely even this government must find that unacceptable, and order him to leave.'

JANA, which provides copy mostly on the activities of Colonel Gaddafi, has refused to deal with its employees as an NUJ chapel. The director of JANA, Saleh Nejim, has been quoted as saying: 'Collective action is a form of tribalism.'

The journalists involved insist they have no political dispute with the government of Libya, but Tripoli has made it clear to the NUJ that it will not put pressure on JANA management to back down.

Deborah Pugh

Police rape policy row

THE HOME OFFICE has privately admitted to local MPs that it is seriously embarrassed about an article on rape written by Hornsey CID Chief Inspector Jay.

The offending piece, entitled 'Rape... or is it?' appeared in a North London weekly, the *Hornsey Journal*, on 20 January. DCI Jay began by describing rape as a 'diabolical crime... which we take very seriously indeed', but went on to say that police cannot always believe women who allege rape, giving three examples where he considered the allegation to have been false. In the first, he said that the woman was lying; in the second that she was mad; and in the third that she was having sexual fantasies. He contended: 'We get young girls fantasising about being raped and then there are those who have a mental disorder coming to us with the most incredible allegations'.

Local women were outraged by the article which they felt would discourage women from reporting rape to the police. Many wrote letters of complaint to the Home Secretary, to the police and to MPs Norman Atkinson and Sir Hugh Rossi. On 15 March Douglas Hurd, Minister of State at the Home Office, wrote to both MPs saying that he shared the 'concern' expressed about Jay's article and admitted that it flew in the face of a 1983 Home Office circular which urged police to treat the women concerned with 'tact and understanding'.

Local women wrote a letter inviting DCI Jay to a meeting to explain why they objected to his article. But instead, the police arranged a 'private and restricted' meeting at Hornsey police station to which some women — but not all who had expressed an interest — were invited.

The women decided to boycott — and picket — the meeting. They wanted the discussion to be in public because they feel police attitudes to rape affect all women. A spokeswoman for the local women's action group said: 'Until the police are made democratically accountable to women in Haringey for their handling of rape, there is no point in meeting with them. We shall now write to the Home Secretary asking that he publicly condemn DCI Jay's article, and make a statement as to what his future role will be in investigating rape cases.' The *New Statesman* was told DCI Jay was 'not available to comment'.

Eva Lytton

Tories' worst month since 1982

MARCH WAS the worst month for the Conservatives in local council by-elections since the Falklands War two years ago. They lost seven of the 15 seats they were defending and gained only one. Four of their losses were to Liberal candidates, the others to independents.

Labour, meanwhile, had one of its best months, losing only one of the 11 seats it was defending and gaining two. One of these gains, in Bishop's Ward, Lambeth, gave Labour a particularly sweet taste of revenge: the same ward produced two Alliance victors in a double by-election in July 1981, just after the formation of the Liberal/SDP Alliance. The win ensured Labour retained overall control of the council.

The full gains and losses table is as follows:

	Seats defended	*Seats lost*	*Seats gained*	*Seats held now*
Con	15	7	1	9
Lab	11	1	2	12
Lib	4	1	6	9
SDP	2	2	1	1
Others	2	2	3	3

Twenty-four of the 34 contests were three-cornered. The 64,091 votes cast in these by-elections were distributed as follows:

Conservative	22,087	34.5%
Liberal/SDP	20,826	32.5%
Labour	19,095	29.8%
Others	2,083	3.3%

On the face of it, the Conservatives appear to have re-established a narrow lead. However, the raw figures conceal the fact that March's three-cornered contests were mainly in normally Conservative territory. Calculations made by Robert Waller of Magdalen College Oxford for BBC-2's *Newsnight*, comparing the latest results with comparable past figures in the same wards suggest the following pattern of national support: Labour 36 per cent, Conservative 33, Lib/SDP 28.

Peter Kellner

Council scoreboard

9 February
Chiltern DC Con hold

16 February
Grimsby DC Lib hold
South Oxon DC LIB GAIN (Con)
Hambleton DC Ind hold

23 February
Aylesbury Vale DC LIB GAIN (Ind)

1 March
Tower Hamlets LBC LIB GAIN (Lab)
Braintree DC LIB GAIN (Con)
Boothferry DC Lab hold
Wiltshire CC Lab hold
Three Rivers DC Lib hold
Birmingham City Con hold
East Sussex CC Con hold
Carrick DC Con hold

8 March
South Kesteven DC LIB GAIN (Con)
Avon CC CON GAIN (Lib)
Preston DC Lab hold
Scunthorpe DC Lab hold
Warwick DC Lib hold
New Forest DC Con hold
Newark DC Con hold

15 March
South Cambs DC SDP GAIN (Ind)
Merton LBC IND GAIN (Con)
Merton LBC Lab hold
Stockton DC Lab hold
Tyne & Wear CC Con hold

22 March
Lambeth LBC LAB GAIN (SDP)
Rossendale DC LAB GAIN (SDP)
Kingston LBC LIB GAIN (Con)
Swansea DC Lab hold
Southampton DC Lab hold
Devon CC Con hold
Central Region (Scot) Lab hold

29 March
Greater Manchester CC LIB GAIN (Con)
Aberconwy DC LIB GAIN (Ind)
Copeland DC IND GAIN (Con)
Shepway DC IND GAIN (Con)
Cleveland CC Lab hold
Ryedale DC Lib hold
Teignbridge DC Con hold

*Seat previously held by SDP; defended this time by Liberal candidate.

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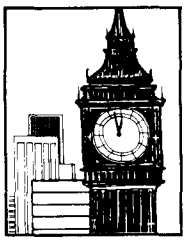

PETER KELLNER Political Editor

What 107 MPs got up to one hot Friday afternoon

NEXT MONDAY Sarah Tisdall's appeal against her six months sentence for breaching the Official Secrets Act will be heard. We shall, very properly, be reminded that the Act passed through all its stages in the House of Commons in 1911 in less than an hour. The speed of the Act's passage is rapidly becoming one of the best known facts of early twentieth century British politics. What is less well known is what provoked this discreditable event. It is worth recounting what happened.

Before 1889 Britain had no legislation to protect secrets. Newspapers regularly received and published government documents — decades before the introduction of photocopiers — and scarcely a hair was turned. Things went a bit far in 1878, when all sorts of delicate negotiations took place at the Congress of Berlin.[1] On 30 May *The Globe* published details of a secret agreement that had been reached between Britain and Russia. This was not the sort of thing to grease the wheels of diplomacy, and a search started for the culprit.

He turned out to be a young copying clerk in the Foreign Office, one Charles Marvin. Marvin was charged with larceny, but after three appearances at Bow Street magistrates' court the case against him was dismissed. Among other things it turned out that there was no rule against civil servants moonlighting as newspaper contributors; Marvin's 'leak' was simply the latest of a series of profitable but legal disclosures he had made to *The Globe*.

The first consequence of the Marvin case was a tightening of the rules about what serving civil servants could disclose. The second consequence — although Marvin's case was not the only cause — was the Official Secrets Act of 1889. Introducing it in the House of Lords, Lord Halsbury made it clear it was designed solely to prevent sensitive military information from reaching the hands of actual or potential enemies of Britain. 'This Bill', Lord Halsbury said,

> provides for the punishment of those persons who either give information to the enemies of the country, or who act as spies, or make or communicate plans or sketches of fortresses and like places, or disclose official secrets.

The Act was not a success. Few prosecutions were mounted and those that were pursued tended to result in acquittal, suspended sentences, or convictions merely for 'misdemeanors'. One such case concerned a former quartermaster in the Royal Engineers called Edward Holden, who procured a lance corporal on behalf of the French to obtain plans of fortresses, fortifications and gun positions in Malta and Gibraltar. Holden's 'misdemeanor' cost him just 12 months in jail. It was an occasion, reported *The Times*, where

> the inadequacy of the law was made painfully manifest. A rascal who had worn the late Queen's uniform was caught red-handed in an act of the basest treachery.

One of the problems of enforcing the sterner provisions of the 1889 Act was that it was not enough to prove that someone had transmitted secret information: the *motive* of treachery had to be demonstrated. And evidence of intention, as opposed to action, was almost impossible to obtain. In 1908 the Lord Chancellor, Lord Loreburn, introduced a new Bill to make prosecutions easier.

This Bill became a target for strenuous press criticism. Newspapers opposed the Bill on two counts: that it would put free speech in general and journalists in particular in jeopardy; and that the Bill would in practice protect incompetent and weak ministers and officials rather than genuine secrets. They were arguments familiar to any journalist today; but with one difference: the 1908 campaign succeeded. Loreburn's Bill did not.

SADLY, THIS VICTORY for free speech was short lived. As tension mounted between Britain and Germany, and the 1889 Act proved to be inadequate for prosecuting suspected spies, a sub-committee of the Committee of Imperial Defence was asked to examine how to amend the Act. Had this group had adequate time to consider what to do, and the Houses of Parliament to deliberate their proposals, much of today's fuss could have been avoided. In the event, the necessary time was not allowed.

By 1911 spy fever had become epidemic. It coincided with the Agadir crisis, when Germany sent a gunboat to Morocco. On 21 July Lloyd George spoke at the Mansion House to warn Germany publicly of the risk of war. Four days later Lord Haldane, Secretary of State for War, introduced the second reading of a new Official Secrets Bill in the House of Lords. The greater part of Lord Haldane's speech concerned the problem of proving a suspect's intent:

> Not many months ago we found in the middle of the fortifications at Dover an intelligent stranger, who explained his presence by saying he was there to hear the singing of the birds. . . Then there was another case of a man who was sketching fortifications. He ran away, but was caught. The case was one which attracted attention at the time, but our means of proving his purpose were extremely inadequate. . .

And so on. Clause 1, subsection 2, of the new Bill, Lord Haldane explained, would make prosecution easier. If someone were caught in suspicious circumstances, his 'motive may be inferred if from the circumstances of the case or his conduct or his known character he may be taken to have been there to no good purpose': it would be up to the accused to prove an innocent motive, not up to the prosecution to prove a guilty one.

Haldane briefly listed the other proposed changes but without referring once to the 'catch-all' provisions of section 2, which has now landed Sarah Tisdall in jail. Three more peers spoke, all in support of the Bill, and the Lords then approved it without a division. By 8 August it had passed all its stages in the Lords without further debate.

On 18 August the Bill reached the Commons. It attracted little attention. That day's main news event concerned a railway strike. The Home Secretary, Winston Churchill, made a statement to MPs. Afterward, those MPs who stayed behind (it was a Friday) settled down for a brief debate on what Major General J. E. B. Seeley, as Under-Secretary for War, introduced as 'this small amendment to the law' on official secrets. Nineteen years later Seeley recounted what happened:

> I got up and proposed that the Bill be read a second time, explaining, in two sentences only, that it was considered desirable in the public interest that the measure should be passed. Hardly a word was said as the Bill was read a second time; the Speaker left the Chair. I then moved the Bill in Committee. This was the first critical moment; two men got up to speak, but both were forcibly pulled down by their neighbours after they had uttered a few sentences, and the committee stage was passed.
>
> The Speaker walked back to his chair and said: 'The question is, that I report this Bill without amendment to the House'. Again two or three people stood up; again they were pulled down by their neighbours, and the report stage was through. The Speaker turned to me and said: 'The third reading, what day?' 'Now, sir', I replied. . . It was open to anyone of all the members of the House of Commons to get up and say that no Bill had ever yet been passed through all its stages in one day without a word of explanation from the minister in charge. . . But to the eternal honour of those members. . . not one man seriously opposed, and in a little more time than it has taken to write these words that formidable piece of legislation was passed.[2]

For the record, the Bill was passed by 107 votes to ten. So more than 500 MPs abstained or were absent when this fearsome piece of legislation was passed into law. But then, it was a hot Friday afternoon in the grouse-shooting season, and only a 'small amendment of the law'.

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1. My account of the earliest attempts to protect official secrets is drawn largely from *Not in the Public Interest* by David Williams, published by Hutchinson in 1965.

2. Quoted in the handbook of the 1984 Campaign for Freedom of Information.

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DISARMAMENT

Only doing our jobs

Making weapons is a process in which a massive amount of capital and labour are invested. Rob Edwards reports on the efforts to switch this into less harmful products.

AN EARNEST discussion on the practicalities of nuclear disarmament was in progress. 'Tell me', demanded the trade unionist, 'what is a fitter actually going to do and what is a boilermaker actually going to do?' There was a short embarrassed silence as some of the peace campaigners shrugged their shoulders. 'If you've got no answer', he said a trifle tetchily, 'I'll tell you what they will do, they will just get on with their job — making bloody bombs'.

This kind of exchange will be familiar to many involved in the peace and trade union movement. The conflict between what some regard as the immorality of weapons production and what others regard as the right to work has occasionally been dramatised in less comfortable terms — most notably at Greenham Common. Mutual understanding has not been enhanced by those peace campaigners who take it upon themselves to confront workers directly with their supposed sins.

Yet tangible progress towards bridging the gulf is being made. This weekend over a hundred trade unionists directly involved in the 'defence' industry, including civil servants, scientists, technicians and shipyard workers, are gathering at Bradford University to take part in a unique debate about the future of their jobs. Sponsored by a range of trade unions (TGWU, AUEW-TASS, ASTMS and the Society of Civil and Public Servants (SCPS)), the conference will bring together more expertise than has been assembled before and, with luck, will give an unprecedented boost to the growing campaign for alternatives to arms production.

It may seem an obvious step for peace campaigners, but it is one which treads uncomfortably on many of the conventions of trade unionism. Some unions, such as the electricians and the engineering workers, have not been very co-operative. There was a deliberate decision to downplay the fact that the conference was being organised by Trade Union CND in order not to deter the more conservative unions, a policy which has had some success. There are still tensions and misunderstandings between different unions and between union members, officials and academics. Nonetheless, this weekend's gathering is a sign that the anti-nuclear movement is growing from adolescence into maturity.

In 1981 when the Labour Party National Executive Committee (NEC) revived the policy of cutting back Britain's defence spending to the European average (currently interpreted as a reduction from about 5 per cent of gross domestic product to about 3.5 per cent), five of Labour's frontbench defence team, including the Shadow Minister Brynmor John, caused a stir by arguing that this could lead to the loss of over half a million jobs. When a similar policy was enshrined in Labour's 1983 general election manifesto, it was the Tory defence minister Michael Heseltine who claimed that 400,000 job losses would result — an allegation that went unanswered in the media. Alarmed, six major trade unions hurriedly dispatched a circular to all their members in the defence industry assuring them that Heseltine was telling fibs.

Labour's manifesto also promised that

> A Labour government will plan to ensure that savings in military expenditure do not lead to unemployment for those working in defence industries. We shall give material support and encouragement to plans for industrial conversion so that the valuable resources of the defence industries can be used for the production of useful goods.

Most observers agree that, if Labour had formed a government, it would have had difficulty in giving real substance to the promise in the short term. A detailed paper on defence industry conversion suggesting a range of specific policy options agreed by the NEC was discussed only once by the Labour Party/TUC Liaison Committee before the election and was never formally agreed or published. And it was only in 1983 that the TUC's annual economic review first dealt in detail with the issue. The recent ferment of research and activity on alternatives to arms production came too late to have any major impact on Labour's senior policy makers.

Almost a decade ago, the Lucas Aerospace shop stewards' combine committee (ie combining all the unions involved) started work on its celebrated alternative plan for making 150 socially useful products. Since then, progress has been slow. A number of less comprehensive initiatives have been made by workers at Vickers, at the naval dockyards at Rosyth and Chatham and elsewhere. Faced with doubt over the future of the Tornado aircraft, the shop stewards at British Aerospace in Warton attempted in vain to persuade the company to divert 1 per cent of a wage increase towards work on alternative production. But nothing seemed to come from these brave beginnings.

According to Geoff Peppiatt, a researcher with the TGWU, it is only in the last 18 months that 'things have really taken off'. Well-argued reports have been produced by the TGWU, the SCPS, the Civil and Public Services Association, and the Institute of Professional Civil Servants examining the structure of the defence industry and proposing practical steps towards conversion. The IPCS report, for example, concludes that if resources are sensibly redirected and there is sufficient forward planning

> nuclear disarmament would be likely to have a positive net effect on employment in the economy and it should be possible to safeguard the livelihoods of IPCS members presently working in the nuclear defence programme.

The Greater London Council has quietly established its own Conversion Council for which Bill Niven from Sussex University Science Policy Research Unit has produced a detailed analysis of the defence industry in the city (concluding that the South East has the highest concentration of defence work in Britain). Trade unionists from West Germany, Italy and Britain have met in Amsterdam for the first time to discuss their shared role in assembling Tornado. Remarkably, engineering workers at the Rolls-Royce factory at Hillington in Glasgow voted last year to refuse to work on a £20 million stainless steel tubing contract for the Trident nuclear missile system. This was in spite of the fact that the workforce had been reduced by 40 per cent over the previous couple of years. In addition there has been a ferment of academic research concentrated in London, Sussex and Bradford — and it all tends towards similiar conclusions.

SPENDING MORE money on weapons does not lead to more work making them. Over the last two decades the total number of people employed in defence work has fallen by about 25 per cent, while defence spending has increased by over 20 per cent in real terms. Another 200,000 jobs may disappear by 1987.

The reason for the apparent anomaly is that an increasing proportion of the defence budget is being spent on high technology equipment, such as Trident missiles and Tornado aircraft, instead of on people. The defence industry is very capital-intensive, meaning that relatively large amounts of money have to be invested to create relatively few jobs. The TGWU estimates that for every 10 jobs created in defence, 13 could be created in the health service or construction and 15 in local government.

Some analysts go further and suggest that high defence spending is partly responsible for the economic recession. The evidence is impressive but not conclusive, resting largely on broad-brush international comparisons. The US Council on Economic Priorities carried out a study of 13 advanced industrial nations which revealed that the UK, with the second highest level of military spending, ranked bottom in growth of gross domestic product and next to bottom in both investment and growth of manufacturing productivity. By contrast,

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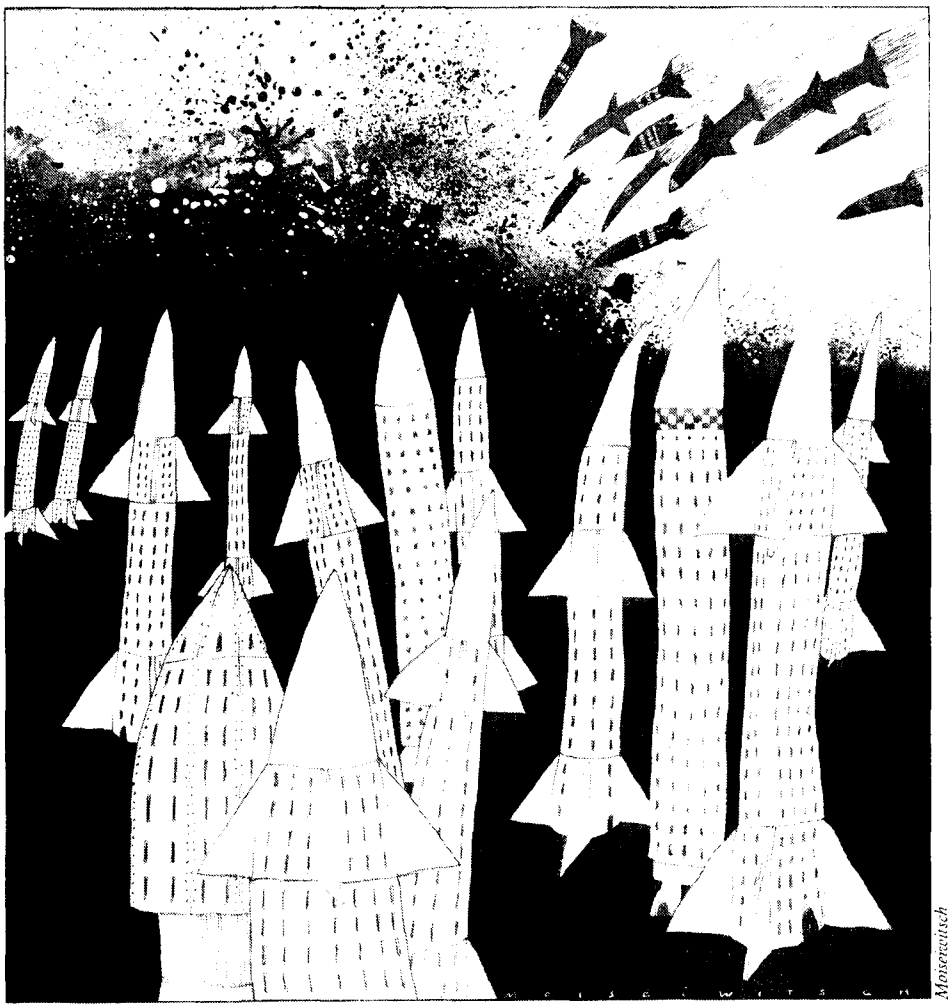

Mosiewitch

Japan, which spent the least on defence, easily outstripped all comers on the three indicators of economic success. Hence the pressure of the West on Japan to 'share the burden' of defence.

In this context it is easy for trade unionists to see the importance of arms conversion. Whether the policy is rearmament or nuclear disarmament, jobs in the defence industry are under threat. Whether disarmament is unilateral, multilateral or a mixture of both, is strictly irrelevant. Those working directly for the Ministry of Defence foresee a further problem in Heseltine's recently announced MINIS plan — a system of management information to reorganise the Ministry and shed jobs. The paramount need is for trade unionists right across the spectrum to join together to find solutions to their common plight. The knee-jerk response of simply protecting what exists — like the shop stewards who lobbied the Tory government in 1981 not to cancel the Skyflash II missile programme — must be avoided.

Two main conversion strategies have so far been sketched out. The first, adapted from an American model by Bill Niven and more or less adopted by the Labour Party, envisages the establishment and funding of a National Industrial Conversion Council (NICC) involving the government, the employers and the unions (see *New Statesman*, 6 June 1981). The Council would oversee and assist the work of a number of strategically-sited Regional Conversion Offices, which would in turn look after an emerging network of factory-based Alternative Use Committees. The NICC would be comparable to existing quangos like the Manpower Services Commission or the Equal Opportunities Commission and is designed to graft onto the kind of overall economic planning system proposed by Labour.

A second strategy has been developed by Tony Topham, the convenor of the European Trade Union group for END, the European Nuclear Disarmament campaign. He rejects the Niven notion, seeing it as a 'top-down, boxed-in tripartite institution' which is part of an out-moded 'Fabian corporatist model'. Topham argues that the interests of workers and management are so fundamentally opposed that any moves towards arms conversion will have to be forced on management by collective bargaining, or in the last resort by nationalisation. Topham urges 'the development of autonomous shop steward-trade union powers, a massive open-the-books operation, and a huge, labour-movement controlled adult education programme'.

According to Bill Hodgson, the vice-chair of Trade Union CND and one of the moving forces behind this weekend's conference: 'Niven's plan depends on there being a Labour government, while Topham's depends on having a well-organised shop steward movement. Unfortunately, we've got neither. We need some kind of good old British compromise'. Large-scale arms conversion programmes have, of course, been successfully implemented in the past. In Britain at the end of World War II eight million workers were redeployed from military production in the space of 18 months. And in the United States after the Vietnam war military spending was reduced in real terms by 35 per cent between 1968 and 1976, slashing the number of jobs in defence industries from 3.2 million to about 1.4 million.

BEFORE ANY such strategy becomes a realistic option there are many bridges still to be crossed. There are plenty of practical ideas as to what most skilled defence workers could do — but are the new products desirable in themselves, or merely as better things to make than weapons? Nuclear weapons designers could be diverted to the civil nuclear power programme, which is itself deeply unpopular; should our resources go to high technology medical equipment like kidney machines at the expense of the Cinderella services? Does it make sense to produce gas turbines for merchant shipping when such engines are not 'fuel-efficient'? All these projects invite opposition. On the other hand no one has yet come up with realistic alternative employment suggestions for non-industrial civil servants.

Trade union officials readily admit that, although there has been burgeoning interest in arms conversion amongst officials and shop stewards, the issue has yet to make a significant impact on the shopfloor. The rank and file who are never invited at the best of times to play a part in deciding the shape of their working lives can see their well-paid jobs in a prestigious industry being arbitrarily played around with. Many regard conversion schemes with scepticism or outright hostility. As Bill Niven points out, the psychology of being a good defence worker and a good trade unionist is complicated. 'Your sweat goes into a product day in, day out, in exactly the same way as that of your colleagues in civil production' he said. 'Yet your contribution is described as wasteful, inflationary, destructive, horrific, monstrous.'

That is why, after Bradford, there will be a need to take the campaign to the workplace, to discuss honestly and openly the issues with those who are most directly affected. If this important but difficult step can be taken, and if research can produce the right kind of hard-headed employment alternatives, there is hope that arms conversion may be transformed from a slogan into a reality. □

These are the principal publications in Britain on arms conversion.

A Better Future for Defence Jobs, Transport and General Workers Union, 1983.

Defence Expenditure and Employment, Society of Civil and Public Servants, 1983.

The Employment Effects of Nuclear Disarmament, The Civil and Public Services Association, 1983.

Nuclear Arms, Defence Spending and Jobs, Institute of Professional Civil Servants, 1984.

Trade Union Strategies for Disarmament, Bill Niven, Science Policy Research Unit, University of Sussex, 1983.

Defence Expenditure and Employment in Greater London, Bill Niven, Science Policy Research Unit, University of Sussex, 1983.

Threat or Opportunity: The Economic Consequences of Non-Nuclear Defence, Howard Clark, Alternative Defence Commission, Bradford University, 1984 (unpublished draft).

'An Approach to Defence Industry Conversion', Bill Niven and 'Labour Movement Strategy for Arms Conversion', Tony Topham, both in *ENDpapers 5,* Spokesman, 1983.

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NORTHERN IRELAND

Taking the middle ground

Protestants are clearly shaken by the renewed involvement of middle-class Catholics in Republican politics, writes Mary Holland

ONE RECENT EVENT has done more to concentrate the minds of Northern Irish Protestants on present realities than have the combined efforts of James Prior, Gerry Adams and the New Ireland Forum.

On 21 March, Owen Connolly, a retired civil servant living in a prosperous middle-class suburb in East Belfast, was charged with the murder of the deputy governor of the Maze Prison. His wife, who worked as a clerk for Belfast City Council, and his daughter, a typist at Stormont, were charged with withholding information about the crime.

Gerry Adams and other well-known Provisional leaders are a phenomenon that Ulster Protestants understand — working-class Catholics born and reared in the deprived Republican ghettoes of Belfast and Derry. But Owen Connolly, a former RAF officer who flew bomber missions over Germany during the war, is rather different. In court the prosecution alleged that Mr Connolly had become extremely embittered when he returned to Belfast after the war and, 'rightly or wrongly', had decided that a united Ireland was the only way of achieving a fair deal for everybody.

Whatever the outcome of his trial, the fact that somebody like Connolly could even be suspected of IRA involvement has brought home to Protestants, in a way that nothing else could, how far support for the Provisionals now extends into the Catholic community. Yet it should not come as such a surprise.

When the Civil Rights Movement first took to the streets in 1968 it commanded considerable support from middle-class Catholics. In some ways, it was the Catholic professional classes who felt more resentful about the power and patronage which was at that time associated with a Protestant State for a Protestant people. It denied them what they felt would be rightfully theirs in any 'normal society': a say in the running of things and equality or opportunity in their chosen careers, particularly in the public sector. For a long time these Catholics have been appalled by the Provisionals. The majority of them are probably still scared off by the violence of the IRA and the extremist rhetoric of Sinn Fein. Their hopes have resided with the moderate constitutional politics of John Hume's Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP). That may now be changing.

Sinn Fein is now attracting into its ranks not just the unemployed 'no hopers' of the Catholic ghettoes, but the young — and not so young — educated, articulate radicals who have despaired of the SDLP. People like teachers and social workers who have hung around the edges of the Provos for several years are now quite openly active members of Sinn Fein.

There are other, more important, straws in the wind, all deeply alarming to Ulster Protestants. Within days of the Connolly family's first appearance in court, two graduates of Queen's University, Belfast were charged in connection with the murder of the Unionist assembly member, Edgar Graham, who was gunned down as he left his office in the Law Faculty building. 'There have been four shootings in this place', a member of the University staff told me, his voice shaking with anger 'and every one of them must have been set up from inside'. Over the years this man has struck me as a reasonable and relatively moderate Unionist. He is not moderate any more. 'As far as I'm concerned', he continued, 'it doesn't matter if Sinn Fein wins the Catholic vote away from the SDLP. At least we'll all know where we stand then, and so, hopefully, will the British government.'

It was a theme echoed in the headquarters of the Ulster Defence Association in East Belfast. 'It's as though the two communities are being pushed into a head-on conflict', said one of its leaders. 'Nobody knows how it will happen and most people don't want it, but nobody can see how to stop it'.

He had been talking about the New Ireland Forum's report which is due to be published before Easter. The UDA submission to it was a thoughtful and carefully drafted document, calling for the Irish Republic to drop its constitutional claim to Northern Ireland and for the British simultaneously to withdraw the unconditional guarantee of support to the Unionists. The submission was agreed just before the attack on a Pentecostal church hall in Darkley, South Armagh, last November. Given the strength of Protestant anger in the wake of that tragedy, it was decided that the UDA should boycott the Forum and the submission was never presented.

THE VAST majority of Ulster Unionists have very little interest in the Forum which has been meeting in Dublin for nearly a year now with the aim, at least in part, of assuaging their fears about a united Ireland. Insofar as they refer to it at all, it is because they suspect that it may be used by London as an excuse to enter into negotiations about the future of Northern Ireland with the Dublin government. There is a deep mistrust of both Dublin and London. Even the extradition of Dominic McGlinchey is regarded as devious — a political ploy by Garret FitzGerald to impress Mrs Thatcher.

But it is the rise of Provisional Sinn Fein which dominates the thinking of Northern Ireland's Protestants. They are being pushed in two, quite contrary, directions. For some it simply proves that the nightmare they always feared has come true: that all Catholics support the IRA. They talk about two possible solutions to their political problems. One is integration with the United Kingdom, which they don't believe will happen because Britain does not want it. The other is repartition, which some people think the Unionist Party should now be actively canvassing for.

Others see the battle for the hearts and minds of the Catholic community rather differently. Brought face to face with the real threat of a triumphalist Sinn Fein, they now see the SDLP in a new light. They talk much less about the 'Republican aims' of John Hume and his colleagues and rather more, approvingly, of the fact that they don't kill Protestants in pursuit of those aims. Several times I was told, by members of both the main Unionist parties, that if the SDLP would only return to Northern Irish politics (by abandoning their boycott of James Prior's assembly) they would be 'amazed' at how generous Unionists would be prepared to be. Pressed as to how this generosity might manifest itself, they tended to retreat into vague generalities. But they also made the point that it would be political suicide for any Unionist leader to profess generous leanings towards the SDLP in public, on the record.

And there's the rub. These are, presumably, the moderate Unionist voices which Mr Prior claims to have detected and in whom he seems to repose considerable hope. But for over a decade now there have been Unionist politicians who have been prepared to concede privately that there can be no return to Stormont and that some realistic accommodation must be reached with the Catholic minority. They don't say so in public for the very good reason that none of their own supporters would vote for them if they did.

The only thing that might push them into a more conciliatory position now would be if the British government were to spell out unequivocally that British patience with the problems of Northern Ireland is coming to an end. On the other hand that might have quite the opposite effect and push them to the other extreme. The next few months will be crucial in determining whether Mrs Thatcher, unlike her predecessors, is prepared to take that risk. □

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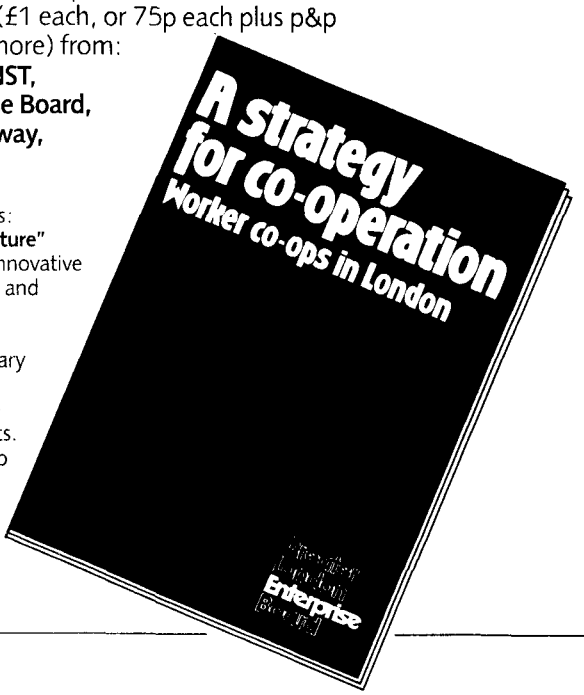

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Black books

Margaret Busby reviews this week's book fair and the emergence of a new Black voice

IT HAS NEVER been difficult to *see* Black people in Britain's cities. 'The number in this metropolis only is supposed to be near 20,000; the main objection to their importation is, that they cease to consider themselves as slaves in this free country', reported *The Gentleman's Magazine* in alarm in 1764. The Black presence in Britain goes back centuries before 1948 when the *HMS Windrush* docked in Southampton with the first post-war contingent of West Indians, mostly ex-servicemen.

But it is only recently that a distinct Black voice has begun to emerge and speak clearly. The 3rd International Book Fair of Radical Black and Third World Books, being held from 5-7 April in Acton Town Hall, and its eight-day accompanying festival, is a celebration of that presence. Over 150 publishers, distributors and booksellers will be exhibiting their publications. Scores of writers and performing artists from Africa, the Caribbean, Asia, North America and Europe will speak, sing, act. They will, in the words of *Race Today's* Darcus Howe, 'offer insights into social and national personality, resurrect and reshape established forms of expression on a scale undreamt of 25 years ago'.

It has been organised by Bogle-L'Ouverture Publications, New Beacon Publications and Race Today Publications, pioneers in Black publishing and bookselling. Since the festival began last Sunday, it has staged a film evening, a poetry reading featuring Linton Kwesi Johnson, Edward Kamau Brathwaite and Amiri Baraka (formerly Leroi Jones), a tribute to murdered 'dub' poet Michael Smith (whose British debut was at the 1st Black Book Fair in 1982), a concert by young artists — and forums with established writers, including Kenyan novelist Ngugi wa Thiong'o and veteran historian C.L.R. James. Events continue until Sunday, culminating with the only London concert of the American pianist/composer Randy Weston. Giant-sized in talent and physique, Weston creates an African-rooted music that Duke Ellington once described as 'beyond category. . .unique, serious, dramatic, infectious, delightful'.

But the starting point for the organisers was literature, and its role in effecting social and political advance. Perhaps the main function of the fair is to bring together people who have been isolated, allowing them to exchange experiences, aspirations and strategies for development from many different cultures.

Crucial to this is the expanding participation of Francophone Africa and the Caribbean, and the attendance this year of the Havana-based Ediciones Cubanas. For the historical division of the African diaspora according to the tongues and political hostilities of colonising nations is increasingly a thing of the past. George Lamming in *The Pleasures of Exile,* unravelling Shakespeare's parable of colonisation, *The Tempest,* speaks of Caliban as being 'colonised by language, and excluded by language'. There is a move to break with what has been called the colonial mentality which produced an imitative literature from Third World writers who were convinced by the claim to cultural superiority of their colonisers. They believed acceptance by publishers in London, New York or Paris was the only measure of achievement.

Black writers everywhere are concerned with the decolonisation of language, the decolonisation of the mind. Many now choose to present their work in language, accents and forms addressed first and foremost to their own people, rather than to the literary critics of the metropolitan West whose hard-won approval has traditionally been the password to success. One thinks of the Jamaican 'dialect' poets Louise Bennett, Oku Onuora, Mutabaruka, Valerie Bloom, or the Gikuyu-speaking Ngugi. And new publishing initiatives must continue to emerge to communicate these ideas.

A growing awareness does exist among established mainstream publishers in Britain of the need to cater for a multi-cultural society. At the moment Afro-American women seem (not before time) to be flavour of the month. In fact, women as a whole are now having a significant impact on what, at least, is published, principally through controlling their own companies — set up after the women had gained experience in mainstream companies. Yet there remains a dearth of Blacks, let alone Blacks with decision-making power, within publishing companies. Is it enough to respond to a demand for books reflecting the presence of 'ethnic minorities' while perpetuating a system which does not actively encourage their involvement at all levels? The reality is that the appearance and circulation of books supposedly produced with these communities in mind is usually dependent on what the dominant white (male) community, which controls schools, libraries, bookshops and publishing houses, will permit.

Younger Black writers are taking matters into their own hands, and community groups like Black Ink and the Black Writers Workshop in Brixton are acquiring skills to publish their own material, though limited funds make the going slow. (The fair's organisers have never solicited or received any government subsidies.) A new venture is Arawidi, committed to cheap colour books on multi-cultural themes for children.

Apart from its unquestionable aim to inform and entertain anyone who has eyes to see or ears to hear, the Book Fair Festival Week demonstrates what a multi-cultural society is about, and shows, as Jessica Huntley of Bogle-L'Ouverture says, 'a renewed assertiveness of the Black community in its quest for a space and an arena in British political life'.

Just as the course of 20th-century Western art has been influenced by African and other non-European cultures — and conversely one cannot isolate those cultures from the influence of Western technology — so the Eurocentric world of books will be the poorer for undervaluing the creative message of Africa, Asia and the Caribbean. This is not to suggest these literatures be assimilated at the expense of individual character, and neither should they be ghettoised. As Trinidad novelist Earl Lovelace has written recently: 'Nobody is born into *the world.* Every one of us is born into a place in the world, in a culture, and it is from the standpoint of that culture that we contribute to the world'. □

For further information about the book fair contact: 01-579 4920, 01-272 4889, 01-737 2268.

Margaret Busby, who comes from Ghana, is co-founder of publishers Allison and Busby.

MINERS

Security blankets

Jonathan Winterton exposes myths about the Notts field

POLITICAL leadership of miners in Britain has come from various mining areas — from South Wales to Scotland and Yorkshire — but it has never come from the Notts coalfield. Indeed, this East Midlands area, less isolated from other industries than South Wales and Scotland, has had a long tradition of refusing political militancy. It was the Notts miners who produced a breakaway union during the 1926 general strike, led by George Spencer.

But now two myths are nurturing the reluctance of Notts miners to support a strike which they see as merely political. The first myth is that the investment in new technology in Notts pits will avoid pit closures and job losses. The second is that they are enjoying the fruits of high productivity through the bonus scheme.

It is true that few Notts pits face closure in the near future. In South Notts, Moorgreen and Pye Hill will close through exhaustion of reserves, while in North Notts, Sutton's subsidence difficulties may shorten its life. Philip Wright in last week's *New Statesman* described the arbitrariness of the NCB's definition of 'uneconomic' pits, but Babbington and Newstead in South Notts and Sutton and Blidworth in North Notts were all designated as lossmakers by the Monopolies and Mergers Commission, so could face closure in the next round. The closure of these six pits would cost 5,000 jobs out of approximately 34,000 in the Notts area. Far greater job losses will arise in Notts from the further application of new technology.

At present the creation of pit complexes is less developed in Notts than in North Derbyshire

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and Barnsley. Through linking pits underground and automating coal clearance, 400 of the 800 jobs associated with underground coal transport in North Derbyshire were lost last year. In Barnsley the 16 collieries have been restructured into three pit complexes with an estimated loss of 4,000 jobs and productivity approaching 3.5 tonnes per manshift. There are signs of similar intentions in the Notts coalfield. Newstead coal preparation plant has been closed and Bentinck now processes coal from both pits and from neighbouring Annesley. Babbington's coal is currently transported by road to the coal preparation plant at Hucknall.

Since the Notts areas offer the best conditions for advanced technology mining, the jobs lost through new technology will be highest in these areas. In 1982 it was projected that the full implementation of MINOS, the computerised system for organising all colliery operations, would remove 44 per cent of mining jobs in the Notts area. The figure could be higher; the NCB recently referred to a *two man face* by 1987, and overproduction of power station coal may lead to closure of surplus capacity. Jobs are at risk in Notts as much as anywhere else.

The high bonus earnings of Notts miners are accepted as a key factor in their reluctance to take industrial action. However, the NCB have used the bonus to *reduce* labour costs. They are not paying the bonus agreed when the scheme was introduced.

This set a 'standard task', or pre-determined tonnage which had to be mined each week. The basic wage was paid if 75 per cent of the standard task was achieved, with the bonus payment making up a further 25 per cent if 100 per cent of the standard task was achieved. Any increased effort was to result in a proportional increase in the bonus payment. However, since area incentive schemes were introduced in 1978, the bonus payment has gradually slipped from comprising an extra 25 per cent to adding only 18.7 per cent to basic pay. Because of the complications of incentive schemes, few miners have realised that their pay packets hold less money than they should.

Miners' pay

Year	*basic pay (U1)*	*actual bonus for standard*	*bonus at 25%*	*bonus as % of standard*
	£	£	£	
1980	70.35	23.50	23.50	25.0
1981	101.95	26.50	34.05	20.6
1982	121.55	30.00	40.60	19.8
1983	130.30	31.50	43.50	19.5
1984 offer	137.08	31.50	45.75	18.7

If the scheme had remained proportional then the 1983 bonus for achievement of standard should have been £43.50, not £31.50. Moreover, the national average bonus of £40.96 paid to U1 grades should have been £56.47. The average faceworker has lost around £15 per week over the last year; high bonus earners in the Notts coalfield have been cheated out of around £25 per week. □

● *Local groups are being set up round the country to monitor police activity during the miners' strike — on picket lines and motorway intersections. Meeting at Sheffield Town Hall Council chambers on 6 April at 8 pm or phone Sheffield 615388 or Barnsley 385095.*

LIVERPOOL

Cliff hanging

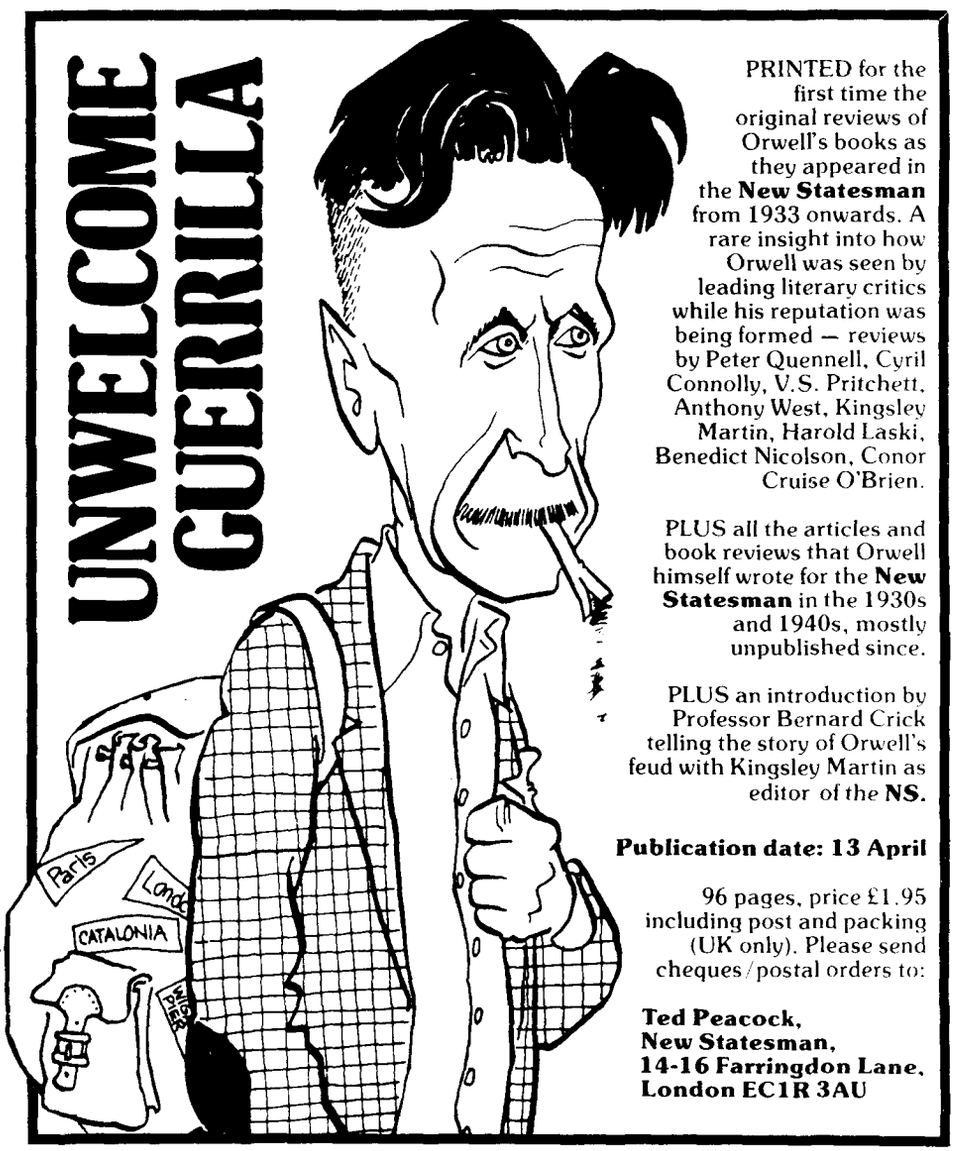
John Rentoul charts the manoeuvres on Merseyside

IT IS BECOMING clear that Liverpool is not going to 'go bankrupt'. Although the city council failed to agree a rate at its budget meeting last week, the district auditor, the government and the national Labour Party will all be bringing pressure to bear on the 54 councillors who voted against the 'illegal' Labour budget to put together some kind of compromise before the elections on 3 May.

Liverpool won't have gone bankrupt anyway, because the last thing the government wants is to take on Liverpool's finances itself. In any case the 'lender of last resort' for local councils — the Public Works Loan Board — cannot refuse to lend money against guaranteed income from rents, and even Ken Livingstone had offered to chip in by buying the town hall with the GLC's pension fund and leasing it back to the council. But the government has decided to make it much easier for the council by continuing rate support grant payments. As the council hasn't yet decided a rate, this has ceased to be a *rate support* grant and has become a 'general generosity grant'. The grant is even being paid at a higher level than last year, because the Department of the Environment is paying the grant, *quite arbitrarily*, as if Liverpool's spending this year were going to meet the government's target.

The reason for the government's 'generosity' is that it doesn't want to pull the plug on a possible compromise, which it is now in almost everyone's interest to achieve. The next few weeks will unfold as follows.

There will be an ordinary council meeting on 11 April. As the result of adroit manoeuvring by the Labour Party at the budget meeting last week, a move to make 11 April a special rate-meeting was defeated. The Liberals and Conservatives then petitioned the Labour chairperson of the council, Hugh Dalton, for a special meeting. Dalton has agreed to arrange a meeting on 25 April. To have delayed until after the elections might have laid himself open to



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action by the council's auditor, Mr Stanford, who made it clear in a report to the council last month that members would be at risk of being personally 'surcharged' if there were unreasonable delay in making a rate.

At this special meeting the 30 Liberals, 18 Conservatives and 6 Labour defectors (who voted against the 'illegal' budget last week) will have to thrash out a 'legal' budget that is acceptable to all three groups.

Last week, the Liberals proposed a budget involving a rate rise of 30 per cent, but the Tories refused to take the calculations behind it on trust, and the shape of any compromise deal that could emerge is still unclear. (The Labour budget involved a 9 per cent rise in rates, but also involved spending £161 million more than planned income.) It is quite possible that the meeting will again founder on the procedural niceties of a hung council with two opposition parties and Labour rebels holding the balance of power, but the auditor is likely to insist that the council keeps on meeting until a rate is agreed.

Only two outcomes are possible — neither of which, incidentally, involves the city going bankrupt. Either the Liberals, Tories and Labour defectors succeed in agreeing a rate, or they do not. They are almost certain to agree, given the threat of personal surcharge if they fail, but it is just possible that, in a tangled stalemate, all the councillors could claim to have done their best and still fail.

IF WE ANALYSE what might happen if they don't agree, we can see why such pressure is being brought to bear to force a compromise. In the elections on 3 May, a third of the council seats are up for election. They were last elected in 1980, which was a good year for the Liberals, so Labour could stand to gain 11 seats. Almost all these new councillors will be candidates known to support the Labour group's policy of 'no massive rent and rate rises, no cuts in jobs and services'. This would turn a wafer-thin Labour majority of three into a safe 25.

The new council would then pass the Labour budget, which the council's officers would probably refuse to carry out. They could refuse to send out the rate demands, and continue running the council on income from rents, from the 'rate support' grant and with loans from the Public Works Loan Board. Meanwhile the auditor would begin the cumbersome process, if he hadn't started it already, of surcharging those councillors he regarded as guilty of 'wilful misconduct'.

If Labour councillors are disqualified or imprisoned, the remaining Liberals and Conservatives could then pass a 'legal' budget, although any by-elections would probably return Labour councillors, who would then have to administer it. Despite speculation in the *Sunday Times,* it is not thought likely that environment minister Patrick Jenkin has a bill prepared to give him the power to send in commissioners to run Liverpool or any other council. If he did, Neil Kinnock would be forced into the awkward position of opposing it, thus appearing to support 'illegality' by Liverpool's council.

But if the Liberals, the Conservatives and the Labour rebels agree to set a rate before 3 May, the apocalyptic confrontation, promised for so long, is deferred until next year. The Liverpool Labour party will be back in the position of administering a budget set by someone else, which is what it has done for the past year, since it took over from the Liberals last May. □

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LLOYD'S

School for scandal

Charles Raw reports on Lloyd's v. the Revenue

LLOYD'S, the City's scandal stricken insurance insitution, has taken a more defiant attitude in recent weeks. This has manifested itself particularly in the Lloyd's position in talks with the Inland Revenue.

These talks are crucial not so much because of the money — although a reported £30 million is involved — but because of their relevance to Lloyd's rejection of its critics' charge of 'institutionalised corruption'. Lloyd's argues that the scandals represent merely a few 'rotten apples in the barrel'.

In the wake of the scandals which started surfacing at Lloyd's in the summer of 1982, involving the 'reinsurance' of risks abroad, the Inland Revenue moved in and forced Lloyd's to examine 'roll over' contracts. The essence of these is that at the end of each year Lloyd's insurance syndicates use surplus funds to take out a 'reinsurance' policy, ostensibly to cover themselves against unforeseen contingencies. They have then been 'rolling over' the accumulated premiums from one year to the next. The surplus funds would otherwise have to be distributed to syndicate members and taxed. The issue is: was this *genuine* reinsurance, or just a device to avoid tax (and incidentally, before 1979, exchange control)?

Lloyd's claims that the Inland Revenue has been confused by the activities of the rotten apples, who used another reinsurance device not just to avoid tax and exchange control but also to divert syndicate funds into their own hands. They did this by 'reinsuring' risks with overseas insurance companies that they themselves secretly controlled in a way that involved them in profit but no risk. Lloyd's position is that the acknowledged misuse of offshore reinsurance by the bad apples does not mean that the whole concept of the roll over funds was improper.

This defence puts the Inland Revenue in a difficult position. If it tries to collect tax on these 'reinsurance' funds since they began in the 1960s, it must allege fraud or wilful negligence. Only on this basis, under the Taxes Management Act, does it have the power to pursue a tax case back more than seven years. If it abandons that argument — and some syndicates are claiming that they had actual Inland Revenue approval for their roll over schemes — then it can only go back to the mid-1970s, with a much weakened position.

Alleging fraud and wilful negligence against virtually the whole of the Lloyd's insurance market would be a daunting business for the Revenue. Its decision, on the advice of the Attorney General, not to start criminal proceedings against the Rossminster tax avoidance people has effectively eliminated the threat of criminal sanctions in any sophisticated tax avoidance cases. On the other hand, a recent House of Lords judgment has considerably strengthened the Revenue's position in civil, as opposed to criminal, actions.

Although Lloyd's will not even admit that it is discussing a deal, I suspect that is the most likely outcome. In fact, Lloyd's would almost certainly be prepared to agree that *all* the reserves accumulated under past reinsurance arrangements should be repatriated now, thus being brought into the current accounts of syndicates and boosting their current surpluses — on which tax would then be paid at today's rates.

The Revenue on the other hand points out that this would yield less tax than if the funds had been taxed at the rates in force when the reserves were build up; and that in the meanwhile the syndicates have benefited tax free from the interest on the invested money. (They will also have benefited in the days of exchange control from having been able to pursue an active investment policy in dollar securities outside the reach of the exchange control regulations — but no one is pursuing that point.)

I hope that the Inland Revenue will take a robust stand. In a curious way this could be in the end even better for Lloyd's. If a private deal is struck, the full extent and details of the reinsurance arrangements will probably never come to light. If the matter is fought out in the courts, we could finally get a public judgment from the House of Lords on the whole legality of the arrangements. A public vindication of the argument that what was wrong with reinsurance was just the activity of the 'rotten apples' would be far better from the Lloyd's point of view than the continuing impression that it involves 'institutional corruption'. Which is what a secret deal with the Revenue would leave. □

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Sally & Richard Greenhill

Babies on the dole

'Sex hasn't changed, men haven't changed enough, and motherhood on the dole is what it always was, gains and losses.' Beatrix Campbell returned to the England that lies north of Watford Gap. Hers was not a journey of disenchantment or nostalgia, but a challenge to the romantic myth of the working man popularised by Orwell and a revelation of the nature — and politics — of women's poverty today. We print here an extract from her account in Wigan Pier Revisited.*

WHEN MEN are unemployed and it is the women who go out to work, the men's economic dependency seems to face many women with a contradiction over housework — they need the men to change, and yet they feel the need to protect men in crisis. Only rarely did they talk of their men willingly taking over the housework and servicing the breadwinner wives. A hospital cleaner in Barnsley works part-time because she's got two small children, taking home £26.50 for seventeen hours. Her husband is a steel erector on short-time: six weeks off and two weeks on. When he's off he qualifies for unemployment benefit, which makes their joint income £49 a week plus child benefit. Until the 1982 health service dispute, she'd never been involved in a trade union, nor had she ever gone to any meetings about anything. But during the dispute she became a shop steward.

> He didn't support our strikes and we used to row about it, but not now. Because we could row for ever and a day, so we've decided not to. Anyway, he knows I'm not going to back down. And I like the job, the women are great and I believe in what we're fighting for. Now that he's on short time he's doing more round the house. I used to do it all, I had complete control of the house, now the situation has changed completely.

A cleaner in a Sheffield hospital has four teenage children, all unemployed and all living at home, and an unemployed husband. She takes home £38 for nearly thirty hours. She says:

> My husband does a bit of housework. He didn't do it before and he doesn't like it, but he does a bit. I'm the breadwinner and it looks like it will stay that way. Mind you, it gets me down sometimes — I'm getting out to work every day and they're sitting around.

No sooner had the women's liberation movement moved from the sixties to the seventies than it saw the economic conditions for its demands evaporate. By the eighties this produced a panic that the political conditions for feminism were disappearing, too. But they haven't. So much for the notion held among some people on the Left that politics is only an expression of economics. But although the impact of women's liberation remains resilient in the culture, a question remains: given the assumption that the road to liberation lay, among other things, in women's *economic* independence, what happens when employment ceases to be an alternative 'destiny'?

The answer is a baby boom. Mothers who took time out from employment for motherhood in the seventies, thinking they'd go back to work later, find there isn't work to go back to. Many of them are having more babies. And in the eighties, unemployed girls who've never experienced economic independence are doing the only thing they can — having babies, either getting married or not, but often staying with their mam and dad, and quite soon getting a council house. They never consider an abortion, often don't use contraception. They want children. Of course they do. There isn't anything else.

Motherhood *and* dependence was the knot women's liberation tried to untie, but the baby boom among many of the young, unemployed mothers I met suggests that, rather than these young women being in retreat, something more complex and contradictory is abroad.

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*Wigan Pier Revisited: Poverty and Politics in the 80s, *published 12 April by Virago, £4.50*

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When they're still young, girls hang around bus stations, leisure centres, bus shelters or each other's doorsteps. A gang of girls I met in Coventry hanging around with some boys who, like them, were unemployed, said that when they were younger they did a bit of vandalising: 'When I got pissed I smashed the windows of posh houses,' said one of them. Her friend said, 'I don't do things without a reason, only when I've got something against people, so we did things like spraying walls, not bus seats, we didn't slash them because people have to sit on them. But we smashed a bus shelter once just for something to do.'

If they were working they'd be going to discos, but because they can't work they stay at home, and because they're girls they do the housework, though they feel they are doing somebody else's housework. 'I do all the housework and the cooking, my mam and dad both work,' said an unemployed teenager in Coventry. 'I don't like beefburgers and things, so now and again I do proper cooking, like stews and puddings — that's the only exciting thing I do. I go to the pub a bit, but I haven't got the money, or I see my boyfriend, or I keep my mam company.'

For most of them sex happens in the same places it always did. 'We do it in fields, or up alleys, or at parties — that's the best.' The girls said some of them were on the pill, others weren't because their mams and dads don't know and they daren't go to the family planning clinic. They have no place of their own — either because they can't afford the Ritzy redoubts of the youth culture, or because home is a place where you're in the way. The only place left is the streets, and street life either costs money, or is dangerous. Hard-line street life doesn't sit easily with the girls' culture, and for all their stylish revolt, in the end the only way to belong seems to be part of the community of women. Faced with the alternatives of the dole, or the angry aggravation of the streets, motherhood brings a sense of belonging. More important, it offers a transition from immaturity made permanent by poverty, to a state of maturity.

So, one of the first things you notice in Northern cities hit by unemployment is babies, lots of babies, with very young parents. Unemployed men in denims and trainers pushing buggies. The sight of teenage fathers is striking because it is in such stark contrast with the role of their own fathers, who weren't seen pushing prams when they were nineteen. You don't notice the young mothers so readily, because they're doing what they've always done. The real change is that many are doing it alone. Men come and go in their lives, but there is no necessary connection between motherhood and marriage. They are going it alone not only because they happened to 'get caught out', but because it is an alternative to aimless adolescence on the dole.

'I always wanted to have a child,' said a nineteen-year-old woman living on a Sunderland housing estate with her parents. Youth unemployment there has reached 50 per cent. 'Having a baby makes me feel a lot older and more mature. At first my mam and dad weren't pleased about me falling pregnant, and they used to go on about how was I going to manage. The bloke denied it was his, I felt awful, though there's plenty have kids on their own round here. In fact the majority fall pregnant and don't get married.' After leaving school at sixteen, she went on a government course, painting and decorating, but after it finished she was unemployed. 'I went to the careers office — nothing.' She then got a factory job, earning between £30 and £40, for four months. Did she consider an abortion? 'It just doesn't seem right.' And what about sex, does she like it? 'Well, it's not everything it's cracked up to be.' She does it 'now and again' and never masturbates. Now, everything she's got goes on the baby.

Older mothers watch their daughters becoming mothers with a wry recognition. 'Oh, they love it when the kids are babies, dressing them up and looking after them, everybody loves babies, but it's different when they get older,' they say. One of the women on this Sunderland estate told me they all recognised the drive: 'It's part of becoming a member of the community instead of just a reckless teenager. You don't need to get a job, when you're a mam. When you're a mam somebody *needs* you.'

HOW DO THOSE young dole-queue mothers manage? A single parent living with her parents gets supplementary benefit of £25 a week plus £5.25 child benefit. If she moves into a council home of her own, her rent is paid direct through the unified housing benefit. Her cash income remains the same, but she has to stock her new home on that and whatever grants she can secure from social security for domestic hardware. These are increasingly hard to get — a Coventry welfare rights centre had so many claimants complaining that they'd not received their statutory entitlement to maternity grants that the centre has printed a special complaints form.

Fuel is these young mothers' greatest problem: it takes a large chunk of their small income, and many mothers are also housed on estates with either excessive heating costs or minimal heating provisions, which forces them to use expensive alternatives. Many of the single mothers I met had accumulated massive fuel debts of £200 or £300, and had had spells without gas or electricity or both.

A young woman living in a semi-detached house on an unpopular Sheffield estate showed me a letter she'd just received from the electricity board: 'A board employee will. . . call at your premises to cut off the electricity supply on 9/11/82. If the board fails to gain entry it will use the law to gain entry to your premises.' The bill was for £19.23. 'I know I'll be all right because there's a few steps to go before it gets to that,' she said, 'but some of the lasses wouldn't know that.'

These mothers may seek maturity through maternity, but that's not the same as domesticity — they aren't into being earth mothers, mega-chefs or craftswomen. The poor, however, are often blamed for their own poverty, accused of budgeting badly or living beyond their means. But good budgeting means having a budget in the first place, having a surplus beyond merest subsistence with which to plan, bulk buy, meet the emergencies which crop up constantly. The speed at which things wear out and break down rises fast when everything you own is cheap. There's an unseemly haste among people who don't have to live on £25 a week to suggest how they could do it better, manage on a minimum and feed the 5,000. Facing people with the budgets of the poor often prompts the response, 'why don't they make soup? or 'Fresh vegetables are cheaper than fish fingers.' But are they? Compare a typical fast-food meal for four with one of the suggestions offered by people who *wouldn't* resort to fish fingers.

Ten economy fish fingers	45p
2lb potatoes (for chips)	20p
white sliced loaf	30p
	95p

potato pot	
2lb potatoes	20p
large tin tomatoes	28p
½lb cheese	50p
onion	5p
½ doz eggs	35p
greens	20p
	1.58p

Then there's the notion that poverty is mitigated by 'doing it yourself'. Of course it is. But this doesn't take into account the capital equipment you need if you're to be self-sufficient. Nineteen-year-old mothers don't have sewing machines, mixers, liquidisers, mincers, drills, paint brushes, *The Readers Digest Book of Home Decorating*. Often they don't have even baking tins, or enough pans. And only *half* have that most ubiquitous machine, the washing machine, according to a Child Poverty Action Group survey carried out with the Family Services Unit in 1981. The cost of launderettes is prohibitive on a subsistence income — so the washing gets done in the sink. The single parent building a home on supplementary benefit doesn't have the tools acquired by workers who've been earning for twenty or forty years. So the new wave of mothers exemplify the separation between maternity and domesticity already entrenched in working-class culture since married women re-entered the labour market after the Second World War.

Theirs is a rebellious motherhood, it's not an uncritical retreat into traditional femininity. But as a resourceless rebellion it also produces isolation and dependency. If motherhood *includes* them in the community of women, poor parenthood also *excludes* them from the public culture of their own generation. 'I got fed up of seeing people I knew getting dressed up and going to pubs or discos, because I couldn't and I didn't know what the latest was — and round here that matters a lot', said a nineteen-year-old Wigan woman with a child. When it is youth culture above all which makes the pace and claims to define what is public pleasure, young single mothers, like young married sisters, are excluded. Their lives are entirely private.

WHO KNOWS what will happen? Will unemployment hasten the domestication of men? People seem to assume that it will, but although women may expect it, there's nothing coming from the men's movement, the working men's clubs, the trade unions and the Labour Party to encourage that transition. Among the women themselves there's the feeling that you hope for the best and expect the worst, a deep pessimism that patriarchy rules and scarpers without paying the bills.

For feminists like me, who live through the

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political processes of women's liberation, which turns sex inside out and reforms relationships with men, even if it doesn't revolutionise them, talking to these young, single mothers proves that gains won in sexual relationships are not necessarily permanent or universal. It's an encounter with women on the edge of transition, discontented and yet disarmed. Sex hasn't changed, men haven't changed enough and motherhood shrouded in poverty is what it always was — gains and losses.

However, the dole-queue mothers aren't just victims, suffering women. Nor are they the 'fallen women' of the past. There is no shame in their situation and they are participating in the disintegration of the moral force of respectability which would once have shamed them within their own class and community. If respectability was undermined after the Second World War by married women refusing dependence and returning to waged work while also having children, it is being undermined again by the new wave of dole-queue mothers who find a measure of independence in motherhood. Both disrupt the rules and regulations of respectability, which was about nothing if it was not about controlling the social status of women. These single parents care about being mothers but they don't care so much about being married and they care even less for being rendered dependent. Unemployment steals from them the economic conditions which supported the new wave of feminism in the sixties and early seventies, but the welfare state, the provision of child benefit, minimal as it is, and supplementary benefit, mean they can survive in the absence of jobs and wages of their own. At least they can get out when the going gets rough, as their grandmothers couldn't. And at least having babies gives the appearance of self-determination.

Nevertheless, their rebellion is paradoxical — it may mean a baby and a home and an income, but it also means exile from the culture of their own generation and the political resources available to the employed, respectable working class and its representatives. Single mothers are disrupting the conservatism of Labourism, they confront the patriarchal principles of women's dependence which is embedded in the old labour movement's codes of behaviour, in housing policies and in the distribution of incomes. But their dissidence is cauterised by their isolation and poverty. Worse than that, in practice if not intent, many local councils, including Labour authorities, treat them as though they were rough and rootless by banishing them to barren reservations. They seem to regard them as patients or problems; the last thing they do is help them *organise*. Labourism has failed to produce a politics of private life which is not patriarchal; at best it pities the dole-queue mothers, at worst it scorns them. The only politics which I saw representing them are those organised by tenants and feminists campaigning primarily around housing, health and children. So their revolt is fraught with contradictions — resilient and yet pessimistic, they have the stamina to survive and not enough to spare. What they need is not a man to take care of them, but a new kind of working-class politics that would take care of them and take care of the radicalism of their case.

Mrs Thatcher and the Oman contract

The House of Commons Select Committee on Members' Interests voted on party lines last month to exonerate the Prime Minister's conduct on the Oman contract affair. But it refused to publish evidence given to it by ***Brian Sedgemore MP.*** *It set out for the first time in full the basis of the accusation that Mrs Thatcher behaved improperly. We publish it here in full.*

1. The Prime Minister's interest in the Cementation contract, Oman, arises out of the following facts:

(1) On 23 April 1981 the Prime Minister lobbied Sultan Quaboos at Salalah with a view to persuading him to give an impending contract to design and build a university in Oman to a British firm.
(2) At the time when the Prime Minister lobbied the Sultan, he and his advisers were aware that Cementation International Ltd had for some time been interested in the contract and were at that early stage the only British company actively pursuing the contract.
(3) Mark Thatcher, the Prime Minister's son, had a pecuniary interest in the impending Cementation contract.
(4) On 21 April 1981 Mark Thatcher arrived privately in Abu Dhabi at the same time as the Prime Minister and met her there.
(5) At the same time as the Prime Minister lobbied the Sultan of Oman, she was aware that her son Mark had a pecuniary interest in the impending contract through his association with Cementation.
(6) Mark Thatcher was present at the Sultan's palace at the same time as the Prime Minister was lobbying the Sultan. Mark Thatcher's purpose in being there was to get work for Cementation.
(7) When she was lobbying the Sultan the Prime Minister knew of her son's presence at the palace as well as of his interest.
(8) At a formal banquet at the palace on 23 April (not attended by Mark Thatcher) the Prime Minister mentioned her son's interest in Cementation to the Sultan.
(9) Concern was expressed by officials about Mark Thatcher's presence in Oman.
(10) Subsequent to 23 April 1981 Cementation International Ltd signed a consultancy, design and construction contract with the Sultan.
(11) When Cementation were awarded the contract they praised the interest which the Prime Minister had shown in the negotiations during her visit to Oman.
(12) The contract said to be valued at £300 million was never put out to tender as might have been expected.
(13) Had the contract been put out to tender Taylor Woodrow among other British firms could have been expected to have expressed an interest.
(14) Taylor Woodrow cannot understand why the contract was not put out to tender. An Export Intelligence Service Notice No 404 dated 11 May 1981 referred to the 'preparation for design tenders' but no tenders for design or construction ever materialised.
(15) Payments and deals in relation to the contract were made which in any other language than Omani can only be described as bribery. The sums involved are huge.

2. In the light of the facts set out in 1(1)-(15) above common sense calls for the following inescapable and irresistible inferences to be drawn:
(1) that the Prime Minister was consciously and deliberately advancing her son's interests
(2) that the Prime Minister was consciously and deliberately advancing the interests of Cementation and
(3) that the Prime Minister was consciously and deliberately advancing the interests of Britain.

3. In the light of the facts set out in 1(1)-(15) above the Prime Minister and her son were demonstrably acting in tandem and pursuing a common interest. In unusual circumstances like these the inference must be that the Prime Minister's interest was indistinguishable from her son's interest. They were as the lawyers say *ad idem*. In these circumstances whether one wants to refer to the Prime Minister's family interest or to her own interest is more a matter of semantics than of substance.

4. In the light of the facts and inferences set out in paragraphs 1-3 above the Prime Minister's interest is seen to be direct rather than indirect. In this respect questions about whether she should or should not have declared her interest in the Register or when answering questions do not hinge on the kind of indirect relationship which was said to exist between the former Rt Hon Reginald Maudling MP and his son, Martin Maudling, in the Poulson affair.

5. In some cases the Committee might think that nothing much hinges on whether an interest of this sort is or is not declared. In this case the Committee may think that it was important for the Prime Minister to declare her interest because both her interest and her actions may have given rise to cultural ambiguities. She may have sent out the wrong signals to the Sultan and his advisers — signals which could have contributed themselves to the failure of the Sultan and his advisers to put the contract out to tender and signals which could have helped countenance the bribery referred to in 1(15) above.

6. It is inconceivable that the signals referred to in paragraph 5 and their consequences could be attributed solely or mainly to Mark Thatcher's interest. They stem from what the Omanis would have accepted as being the Prime Minister's interest in the contract. If blame were to be attached it would be absurd to pin it on Mark Thatcher. Common sense (or if you like a jury properly directed by a judge) would attach the blame to the Prime Minister and in so doing would be saying that the responsibility for what happened lay in the Prime Minister's interest in the contract.

7. In these circumstances the Prime Minister had, in my view and that of others, a direct interest which should have been declared in the Register and when answering questions.

8. If the Committee wish to take evidence I would respectfully suggest that the facts could be established by questioning the following witnesses: Mark Thatcher; the Prime Minister; Ivor Lucas, former Ambassador in Muscat; Michael Alexander (FO); Tim Lankester, economic adviser for trip; Bernard Ingham, PM's Press Secretary; Jamil Amyuni, Cementation Middle East Director; David Platfoot, Cementation; Brigadier Tim Landon, adviser to Sultan; David Leigh, *Observer*; Fred Harrison, *Sunday People*.

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DIARY

Michael Leapman

Nicosia

This year is the tenth anniversary of the Turkish invasion of North Cyprus — or the peace operation, depending on whose rhetoric you happen to be enduring. Few on either side of the Green Line would be too surprised if the 20th anniversary were to dawn without any fundamental progress in resolving the hoary dispute. For someone who has reported the conflict intermittently for the last two decades, the present position has an awful familiarity. Moves are afoot to reopen negotiations between the Greek and Turkish Cypriots following last year's declaration of an independent republic on the Turkish side. The talks may get under way eventually, but not before the compulsory ritual of insults and denunciation, accusations of bad faith and sinister motives. The latest plan was being discussed, dissected and possibly destroyed last week. Under it, the Turks would be required to hand over Varosha — the now deserted resort area of Famagusta — to the UN and to freeze moves to institutionalise their new republic. In return, the Greeks would agree to drop their demand that the independence declaration be revoked as a condition of resuming talks, would halt the reinforcement of their troops and promise not to bring the dispute before the UN for the umpteenth time. I suspect that last condition was slipped in as a personal *cri de coeur* from Perez de Cuellar, who has endured more than his share of the Cyprus problem — it was his special responsibility before he took over as Secretary-General in 1981. Welcome though this self-denying ordinance would be at the UN's New York headquarters, I fear it is destined for the 'Fat Chance' tray.

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Characteristically, the fiercest argument since the proposals were made has been not about their substance but over who leaked them to the press. As each side was accusing the other, a Greek Cypriot newspaper further complicated things by asserting that the Turks had begun to occupy the empty buildings of Varosha. There is no independent evidence for this, but the pattern is for such unsubstantiated claims quickly to assume the status of incontrovertible fact to the partisans of one side, another weapon in the armoury of untruths and half-truths with which the war of words is waged. By reputation, the Greeks are supposed to be smarter than the Turks, yet they have been outmanoeuvred at almost every turn since the dispute began. The confederal solution now tacitly conceded as inevitable by the Greeks would have been accepted by the Turks at any time before 1974. But the invasion upped the ante and the independence declaration gives the Turks another bargaining counter, encouraging them to hold out for a larger percentage of the island's area than they might have settled for earlier. The Greeks feel that they should not be obliged to compromise in the face of Turkish escalation, because they have world opinion on their side. There is an old Turkish proverb — or if there is not there should be — that goes: 'Show me a man who relies on international opinion and I will show you a man without trousers'. The only power able to put effective pressure on the Turks would be the United States, and they're not going to antagonise an important NATO ally for the sake of appeasing a mini-republic whose President needed Communist support to win office.

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Greek Cypriots now have their very own version of the Elgin Marbles dispute, although thankfully it is the Americans and not the British who are at the receiving end. Playing the Melina Mercouri role is Barbara, American-born wife of Vassos Lyssarides, the socialist who ran third out of three in last year's Presidential election. She has begun a campaign in his party newspaper *Nea* for the return of the Cesnola treasure from the Metropolitan Museum in New York. The so-called Comte di Cesnola (his claim to be an Italian count is suspect) fought in the American Civil War and was later appointed American consul in Cyprus, then ruled by Turkey. He quickly realised that quantities of valuable antiquities were there for the taking, so he took them and exported them illegally to America in six ships, one of which sank on the way. The founders of the fledgling museum bought the lot in 1872 and were so delighted that they appointed Cesnola first as curator of antiquities and later director of the whole museum. When it was later found that he had fudged his research — inventing a non-existent dig at Curium rather than admit he had bought most of the stuff from looters — the museum authorities let him stay in

his post, presumably admiring the entrepreneurial spirit that was so highly thought of in turn-of-the-century America. A portion of the collection is still on display at the Met, in a set of rooms off the corridor that leads to the restaurant, but much of it is in the vaults and you might think they would be glad to be rid of it, were it not for the fierce acquisitiveness that I suppose is a qualification for success in the museum trade. Certainly Barbara received little encouragement when she rang the appropriate curator in New York. She was told to raise it with UNESCO. Once that happens, the Turks will presumably claim their share of the booty and it will be something else to haggle over.

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Television and video sets are the rage in both parts of the island. Cynical young Greek Cypriots (I am surprised there are not more of them) joke that when the Turks finally drive them into the sea off Paphos, President Kyprianou will go under crying: 'Our telephone system is the best in the Middle East and we have more videos per head of population than anyone else'. The Turks exploit the TV craze in the propaganda war. They manage to buy better material than the Greek Cypriot station and thus win good audiences in the south. One night I was in a restaurant supposed to be a hotbed of radical politics, but it was deserted because the radicals were at home watching Manchester United play Barcelona on Turkish TV. On Fridays the Turks usually manage to show a blockbuster film, with propaganda during the interval. The other evening it was *The Day After*. I didn't watch it (it was darts night at the United Kingdom Citizens' Association), but I had the propaganda insert vividly described to me. It was a film allegedly shot across the Green Line, showing how Greek Cypriots were supposedly provoking the Turks with insulting behaviour. A Greek soldier was shown reading *Playboy*, then exposing himself, although whether so as to affront the Turks or for his personal gratification is still hotly debated, and the quality of the film was too poor to identify the flasher and ask him. The Greek Cypriots respond to the Friday night challenge by scheduling *Shogun* against the Turks' films. As usual, I fear, too little and too late.

ROGER WODDIS

Uncommon women

'It now seems likely that the authorities will wait until the number of women dwindle and press attention is diverted elsewhere.' — the Guardian *on the Greenham peace camp, now evicted.*

In rural Berkshire, where horses canter
And birds with multiple talons fly,
And women encamped on Greenham
  Common
Dare to bear witness, but not defy
The weight of the State deployed to
  move them,
The Under-Sheriff was camera-shy.

There was a time to remove the benders,
The tents of sheeting and slender trees;
It could not be when the world was watching
With admiration or a deep unease,
But later, when eyes had been diverted
From the naked sword above Damocles.

Deeds that will spawn a bloody darkness
Are better done at the break of day;
They may throw the food in the council
  crushers,
But the shaming women are there to stay.
The heart that is whole and wholly human
Still sings and refuses to go away.

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A one-time revolutionary

This week's military coup underlines the fact that Sekou Toure's hold on power was personal. Suzanne Cronje reviews the career of one of the dominant figures of African independence

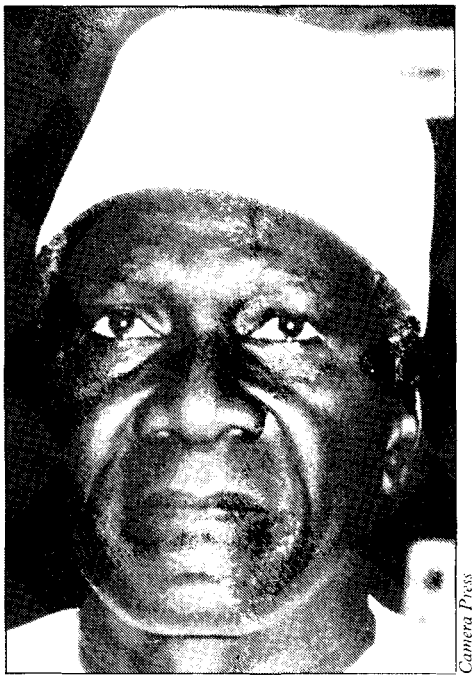
PRESIDENT AHMED Sekou Toure once described Guinea's post-independence experience as a 'state of permanent confrontation'. It was an apt summing up of the sequence of revolutionary fervour, plots and purges which marked his 26 years as absolute ruler of Guinea. This week's military coup in Conakry shows that his unexpected death on 26 March, at the age of 62, will not put an end to the uncertainties of life in Guinea. That he died in the citadel of capitalism, the USA, where he had been rushed from Africa for medical treatment at the behest of the Moroccan and Saudi kings, is also apt. Known in the West as a Marxist dictator, Sekou Toure had, in fact, spent half his time in office trying to establish close economic links with the West. But he started off as a revoutionary — and viewed himself as one to the end.

A successful trade unionist, his popularity was proved beyond doubt when his party won 57 out of 60 seats in elections held under French colonial supervision in 1957. His fame was assured a few months later when he refused to lead Guinea into the French Community, designed to allow France continued control of its colonies, under the guise of autonomy. President de Gaulle never forgave him. He visited Sekou Toure before the fateful referendum in which Guinea voted 'No' — the only French territory in Africa to do so.

De Gaulle recalled this trip in his memoirs, particularly the long drive between airport and capital, the road lined with tiers of uniformed people yelling in one voice, 'Independence!' On his return journey the following day, not a soul could be seen along the same route. Sekou Toure, he wrote, was 'young, brilliant and ambitious' — a champion of Marxism seeking revenge against the imperialists.

Whether Sekou Toure was really a Marxist at any stage is doubtful, but de Gaulle's judgement was a self-fulfilling prophecy. After Guinea's 'No' vote, France withdrew all co-operation and aid — to the last franc. None of France's allies would help — and in desperation Toure even approached Golda Meir of Israel. The Russians stepped in. In 1960 he travelled first to China and then to the Soviet Union, where — with Fidel Castro — he was given the Lenin Peace Prize. But Moscow had made a mistake. In 1961 Sekou Toure sent the Soviet ambassador packing, after denouncing the activities of teachers who, he suspected, had 'a Machiavellian plan to start a Marxist revolution'. Two years later he met President Kennedy in Washington. But his swings from East to West and back again continued for many years: he was a nationalist, an opportunist and had unlimited ambition.

Another friend in need turned out to be



Camera Press

Sekou Toure: nationalist and opportunist

Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, the only other independent leader in West Africa at that time. He came to Guinea's aid with a £10 million loan. This led to an agreement to form a union between the two countries. While this merger had only a symbolic value, a pan-African entity comprising all independent states remained the ideal of both presidents.

The break with France had much greater economic consequences than Sekou Toure had forseen. Attempts to impose a socialist blueprint which stopped traditional trade as well as private ownership in the modern sector were resented. Political friction and hardship caused a migration to less centralised countries, particularly Senegal and Ivory Coast. The manner in which Paris withdrew created a great deal of bitterness and was seen as an imperialist plot to destroy the newly-independent state. Evidence of outright attempts to overthrow the Sekou Toure government came to light, and suspicions of French intentions created a xenophobic atmosphere, reinforced by the fact that the people of Guinea Bissau just across the border were still engaged in an anti-colonial war against the Portuguese.

As the struggle against the fascist government in Lisbon gathered strength, Guinea provided Bissau's freedom fighters with base facilities and diplomatic support. In return Portugal conducted a major propaganda campaign within NATO against the 'Marxist dictatorship' in Conakry. Then, in 1970, the Portuguese helped to mount a more ambitious operation, a mercenary invasion of Guinea: conclusive proof, as far as Sekou Toure was concerned, that the conspiracy against his government was practically universal.

The mercenary invasion failed. In the aftermath of the November 1970 attack the government started a witch-hunt which few who witnessed it will forget. Together with some foreigners, public figures who were suspected of holding opinions critical of the leadership were classed as subversives and arrested. They included politicians who had been close to the president himself. In the secret mass trials which followed, many of them were condemned to death. Stories that they were executed in public were not true (except in one instance), but the bodies of the condemned were later displayed in public places.

Boiro camp near Conakry, where many of the political prisoners were held, quickly became notorious for the inhuman treatment and torture of its inmates. Sekou Toure himself wrote a poem justifying the 1971 executions of 'traitors', and his half-brother, Ismail Toure, declared after the death sentences were passed that 'the traitors will be sacrificed so that the revolution may live'.

With each plot — some real and some imaginary — the repression grew, as did the number of fugitives who settled in other West African countries and in Europe — particularly in Paris. Today, according to French estimates, out of a population of five and a half million, close to two million live in political exile. The refugees and the relatives of those who fell victim to the various purges established powerful anti-Toure pressure groups. Another of Sekou's relatives, Siaka Toure, commanded Boiro camp before being made Minister of Transport. He was also said to have been head of the Secret Service. When Seydou Keita, the president's brother-in-law, visited Paris in 1982 to prepare for Sekou Toure's first visit to France since the quarrel in 1958, he was met by demonstrating exiles shouting, 'Torturer!'.

NEVERTHELESS, foreign investors were attracted to Guinea's enormous mineral wealth. Despite the centralisation of every other sector of the economy in the name of socialism, the mining industry (from which the country derives almost all its foreign exchange) remained in foreign hands and was largely run by expatriates. It was only in 1973 that the government acquired any part of the huge Fria aluminum enterprise — and then only 49 per cent.

The deception worked at home and abroad. Despite the involvement of Western multinational companies, Guinea's reputation as a Marxist state remains. There is recognition that

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some changes have taken place (in fact, Sekou Toure even invited foreign concerns to take up farming). It was striking that Sekou Toure's government was toeing the Western line, particularly in thwarting Libya and co-operating with Morocco over the Western Sahara. Reconciliation with France was a slow process, although the French have now re-gained their position as Guinea's main supplier. But Sekou Toure looked specifically to North America and to Britain for friends. Last October Foreign Minister Abdoulaye Toure had talks in London with the British Steel Corporation and a 'letter of intent' was signed. British Steel is interested in the concentrated iron ore deposits near the Mount Nimba site.

Canada, the base of Fria, Alcan and other aluminum interests, received Sekou and Ismail Toure in 1982. They said that the long relationship between Guinea and Alcan was a 'model of co-operation' with Western capital. Sekou Toure had already been warmly received that year by President Reagan on a private visit to Washington. He had by then been chosen as 1983/84 Chairman of the OAU, a capacity in which he could do much to promote the interests of the US and its allies.

In retrospect the attempts of the OAU to hold its summit in Libya in 1982 were doomed in advance. Sekou Toure did his best to prevent the Tripoli gathering and to stop Colonel Gadaffi becoming the OAU's chairman. (The host of each annual meeting becomes Chairman for the subsequent year.) Guinea convinced a sufficient number of OAU members to stay away and deprive the meeting of a quorum.

1982 WAS the first year without a heads of state meeting since the OAU's foundation in 1963. So the 1983 summit had to take place at the OAU headquarters in Addis Ababa — Gadaffi and his supporters would not have turned up in Conakry so soon after Toure's campaign against Libya. Guinea's turn to chair the OAU was therefore postponed until this year. Even before Sekou Toure's death, however, it had become evident that the issues of the Western Sahara and Chad would provide the same difficulties as in 1982. Sekou Toure spent the last few months of his life in a feverish round of diplomatic journeys, trying to make sure that the Conakry summit would not also lack the necessary quorum.

He did not succeed. A few days before he died, Egypt's Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Butrus Ghali, said that a postponement of the meeting was essential, if it was to be held at all. Egypt is much obliged to Guinea: Sekou Toure engineered its re-entry into the Islamic Conference Organization earlier this year, after it was suspended in 1979 for signing the peace treaty with Israel. It, therefore, appears that Sekou Toure's opponents in the OAU were gaining strength.

The OAU's troubles at this stage are particularly worrying for the Southern African liberation movements. The Ministerial Council Meeting of the OAU refused last month to endorse a resolution giving full support to Mozambique's non-aggression treaty with South Africa, mainly because of Nigerian and Ghanaian objections. Sekou Toure himself, once a fervent supporter of liberation movements in Africa, was less enthusiastic in recent years. □

SOUTHERN AFRICA

Change of tactics

Joseph Hanlon analyses the ANC's position

THREE YEARS AGO, standing next to Oliver Tambo, president of the African National Congress (ANC), the Mozambican President Samora Machel declared: 'We and the South Africans will fight side by side, shoulder to shoulder, until the final victory — until apartheid falls.' Machel has now declared that victory has been achieved and much of the ANC is preparing to leave Maputo — not for an apartheid-free South Africa, but for further exile.

Under the agreement of non-aggression and good neighbourliness, signed by Mozambique and South Africa on 16 March, Mozambique must prevent its territory being used for recruiting, transit, or shelter of ANC guerrillas. In exchange, Pretoria agreed to stop backing the Mozambique National Resistance, which it helped to create in the first place.

Mozambique has cracked down sharply on the ANC. There were no discussions and Tambo had to wait for several weeks in Maputo before being told what was happening. One week after the signing, and with no prior warning, most ANC houses and farms were searched for weapons by heavily armed soldiers, who even confiscated handguns given to ANC officials for their own protection.

It will be announced shortly that the ANC will be restricted to a 10-person diplomatic mission in Maputo. ANC members with Mozambican government jobs can also stay. But the ANC youth, women's, and medical sections must close, and more than one hundred ANC members must go. An ANC farm in northern Mozambique has already been shut. Mozambique will still accept South African refugees, but the ANC will be allowed no contact with them — any who wish to join the ANC will be sent to another country.

Frelimo — Machel's ruling party — did hold out successfully on two significant issues in the negotiations with South Africa. From the first, South Africa demanded the expulsion of certain ANC officials, particularly Joe Slovo who it says is the 'evil genius behind the guerrilla movement'. Frelimo refused, and Slovo remains in Maputo, although his house was raided by Frelimo soldiers while he was at a meeting with the government. Frelimo also successfully defended the ANC's right to an office in Maputo.

As the ANC executive committee said, the accord 'cannot but help to perpetuate the illegitimate rule of the South African white settler minority'. This is a setback for the ANC in two ways. First, it loses access to South Africa through Mozambique. Second, the style of signing of the accord and of the crackdown reduces the international isolation of South Africa and is a blow to the ANC's prestige.

The struggle inside South Africa has escalated dramatically in recent years. Although not the only force, the ANC plays a major role. This is shown not only by dramatic bombings, but by the way ANC slogans, colours, and detained leaders have become symbols of the struggle. In particular, the ANC has made its 'Freedom Charter' central to the demands of many legal political groups.

Since independence in 1975, Mozambique has been one of the most important entry routes, not only for ANC guerrillas, but also for political cadres. Mozambique never allowed the ANC to have overt bases, but it turned a blind eye to people slipping over the border, usually to Swaziland and then South Africa. Even more important, it provided a route for people to come out again, keeping the exile leadership in close touch with events inside.

But it is the style of the accord that hurts most. Frelimo still recites the token condemnations of apartheid, but it now says this is an internal problem. Under the accord, it cannot interfere in internal South African affairs. This is a far cry from the speech Machel gave a year ago, when he told the non-aligned summit in New Delhi that 'racial discrimination in South Africa is just cause for all humanity to wage total war against it'.

Had Frelimo presented itself as the victim of destabilisation, forced to entreat peace, this would have been acceptable as a tactical retreat. Instead Machel claims victory, saying Frelimo forced Pretoria to the conference table, while saying nothing of the continuation of apartheid. The non-aligned movement is particularly angry at Mozambique for breaking ranks in this way, and for rubbing salt in the wound by pressing non-aligned ambassadors in Maputo to attend the celebratory signing of the accord.

IN PART, the show is intended to convince Pretoria that Frelimo is serious. But it is not all show. Some in Mozambique really do question the value of sanctions and isolation, and do think that real change is taking place inside South Africa. Privately the ANC is bitterly dismissive of how 'ill-informed' Frelimo is about South Africa, and especially about its tacit assumption that liberal whites will

Camera Press

ANC's Tambo: in happier times

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combine with Blacks to force effective reform.

That antagonism is reciprocated. Frelimo thinks that the ANC lacks discipline and seems to be only playing at revolution. They say it has failed to make effective use of eight years of an open border, and is wrong to concentrate only on the cities and not organise in the *Bantustans*.

Despite these disputes, the ANC seems to have lulled itself into believing Frelimo's previous promises of total support until final victory was achieved, even though it was warned more than a year ago that some deal with South Africa was on the cards.

But where does this leave the ANC? Its own strategy has been changing for more than a year, both to reflect changes inside South Africa, and because there was a limited recognition that Mozambique could not sustain South African destabilisation forever. There has been more involvement with legal opposition groups and there is more talk of organising outside the cities. Finally there was a realisation that 'armed propaganda' — the strategy of spectacular but isolated raids — had been pushed as far as it could and there is a need to move to more widespread armed struggle.

In retrospect, some think that the ANC took the soft option of relying too much on access through Mozambique, and that this actually delayed the building of a proper base inside South Africa. Thus the shock, although a short-term set-back, could have a constructive effect. It was revealed last week that Swaziland and South Africa signed a non-aggression pact two years ago, but this patently failed to block the ANC. Similarly, as it never completely trusted Frelimo, the ANC built an underground network inside Mozambique. The borders are not closed and some access through Lesotho, Botswana, and Zimbabwe remains possible. □

STATE OF THE UNION

Human wrongs

In our continuing series on Reagan's America, Richard Falk reviews his human rights record

DECODING THE POLITICAL language of the Reagan Administration discloses the basic drift of its approach to human rights. Ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick's famous distinction between 'authoritarian' and 'totalitarian' governments provides the main key. Essentially, if a government is friendly to the United States — that is, anti-Soviet in its foreign policy and receptive to American capital and influence — then, no matter how horribly it abuses its own people, it will at worst be labelled 'authoritarian'.

In authoritarian cases, a concern for human rights is best promoted, Reaganites claim, by 'quiet diplomacy'. The Reagan people will fight domestic liberals to preserve military and economic assistance for the authoritarian government in question and have even, as the necessity of the case requires, certified that a killer regime like that in San Salvador is making 'substantial progress' toward the realization of human rights. Such a certification by the Executive Branch formally satisfies Congressional requirements enacted into law in the pre-Reagan years, restricting the discretion of an American president to channel US economic and military assistance to human rights abusers. The timidity of Congressional liberals allows Reagan to get away with such misuses of presidential discretion.

Furthermore, in international forums the abuses of authoritarian regimes are generally defended by Reagan's representatives against moves of censure and sanction. The line taken is that these governments — say, in Chile or South Africa — are faced with difficult internal threats to their security and that, in any event, singling them out reflects a hypocritical and ill-conceived double standard prevalent in UN circles and elsewhere.

The Reagan *official* stance, of course, is one of support for human rights, no matter who is the violator. They justify their dual-track approach on tactical grounds, arguing that when concerns involve the behaviour of an authoritarian 'friend', the best way to proceed is by way of 'constructive engagement'. One need not be a cynic to doubt whether such discreet tactics achieve or are intended to achieve any practical effect. The Reagan approach should not be written off as naivety, as much as a pragmatic subordination of all aspects of foreign policy to the overriding claims of geopolitics — especially Soviet-US rivalry, and the protection of investments and 'strategic assets' like foreign bases, and local tolerance toward CIA operations.

To be fair, it may be correct that the South Korean dissident leader, Kim Dae Jung, owes his life and release from jail to just such a successful exercise of quiet diplomacy, as Reagan insiders contend. Also, to be sure, domestic sensitivity in the United States and a certain concern about world image and reputation leads even the Reagan leadership to make general endorsements of support for the promotion of human rights. Central American leaders are quietly urged to clean up their act and warned that otherwise the Reagan Administration may not be able to overcome stiffened Congressional resistance to aid packages. Jeane Kirkpatrick never misses an opportunity to let her audience know that she finds South African *apartheid* abhorrent, even while she energetically opposes the most minimal international moves against it. Her denunciation seems intended mainly to reassure minorities in the United States and world opinion that the Reagan policies, whatever their apparent purpose and effects in support of racism, are not *meant* to be racist.

In the end, quiet diplomacy toward so-called

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authoritarian regimes is part of a wider Reagan diplomacy, often assisted covertly by the CIA, to stabilize anti-Communist repressive governments, no matter how terrible their record on human rights. Quiet diplomacy and covert operations are two sides of the same enterprise — namely, organizing the diplomatic and military capabilities of capitalist advanced countries to crush national revolutionary tendencies in the Third World. In this crucial respect quiet diplomacy is a fraud, as the real levers of power are continuously being manipulated behind the scenes to help ensure the survival of governments that are guilty of the most persistent and shocking violations of human rights.

IF A GOVERNMENT is Marxist-Leninist in inspiration, however moderate it may be in practice, then it will be treated by Reaganites as 'totalitarian'. If totalitarian, then the Reagan political logic drives toward public diplomacy of the most hyperbolic variety. Every violation of human rights discerned is highlighted and denounced in inflammatory terms. The worst motives are attributed to left-oriented governments, and their shortcomings grossly exaggerated. The US government relies upon a variety of pretexts, including human rights violations, to disrupt East-West trading relations, injuring not only some American business interests, but even more significantly, interfering with economic policies of its European and Japanese allies. Reagan's foreign policy is built around 'grand design' imagery that builds its ideological case upon the contention that the Soviet Union is 'the focus of evil' in the world.

When Reagan's chief human rights official, Elliot Abrams, denounces North Vietnam as the world's worst violator, the assertion cannot possibly be taken seriously except as one more gambit to drum up enthusiasm for armaments. In relation to Communist regimes, Reagan's supposed concern with human rights is neither more nor less than crass jingoist propaganda, a dangerous indulgence in the nuclear age when war risks are correlated to some degree with levels of tension and ideological hostility.

The real Reagan position toward human rights is even worse than its international profile of ideological manipulation suggests. In its essence, a government's attitude toward human rights is best disclosed by its record toward its own citizenry. Reagan's Administration, more than any recent US government, has built up the repressive side of the national security bureaucracy, extending the protective covering of secrecy to inhibit public scrutiny and strengthening the machinery to detect and punish resistance activities. Minorities of all kinds, as well as women, have been humilated by Reagan's manifest indifference to their particular grievances. In all these respects, Reagan's leadership is government by, for, and of winners, or those endowed with privilege, in the full capitalist sense; those who are disadvantaged, whether as individuals or socieities, are treated as receiving the fate they deserve. To the very real extent that human rights begin at home the most blatant and revealing failure of the Reagan Administration is toward its own people.

And yet, were things ever very different? Didn't Reaganism begin before Reagan? The Carter Administration dropped its human rights emphasis after a couple of years, discovering that playing imperial 'hard ball' was not reconcilable with the serious espousal of human rights. Carter officials preferred to justify their selectivity in relation to violators by reference to the overriding importance of 'strategic considerations'. It was difficult to take Carter too seriously as a champion of human rights when he went out of his way to toast the Shah of Iran, as late as 1 January 1978, as 'an island of stability' beloved by his people. And to the extent Brzezinski as National Security Adviser prevailed in the bureaucractic war he waged against Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, American foreign policy veered strongly in the direction of discovering 'strategic interests' wherever our 'friends' were in power and concentrating moral energy on public denunciation of human rights abuses in the Communist world, thus achieving in practice a pattern resembling the Reagan approach.

And yet there were some notable differences, especially in the early Carter years. The official espousal of human rights as US policy gave the green light to those in the middle levels of the Washington bureaucracy to push human rights in country-by-country contexts; since Reagan, only the ultras on the right have had the go-ahead within the recesses of government. More liberal voices have been stilled or eliminated. As well, Carter's relevant appointments went naturally to those with genuine human rights commitments. And, finally, opposition groups in foreign countries listened to the Carter diplomacy and were often impressed enough to act responsively. I received strong personal confirmation of this unintended impact of Carter's human rights diplomacy in conversations with opposition leaders in Tunisia, Iran, and South Korea. In effect, what is said about human rights in Washington has reverberations in an array of foreign countries, whether intended or not, desirable or not.

In the end, the global spread of imperial interests shapes US foreign policy. As long as this pattern of dominion persists, the range of policy deviation by American leaders will be largely symbolic and marginal, even illusionary. Imperial imperatives continue to be interpreted by *all* elements of the American political mainstream — regardless of party affiliation — as requiring the support of repressive governments in key countries and the containment of national revolution by virtually whatever means available. No advocacy of human rights can hope to withstand these more fundamental pressures on leaders to protect America's overall role in the world, which depends on access to resources and markets, forward bases in Third World countries, and a disposition to intervene covertly and overtly to contain political radicalism. These factors have produced a 'national security' consensus within the US government that elected politicians cannot effectively oppose. Carter came to Washington with an idealistic gleam in his eye, but by the time he departed, he was trying to sell himself to the American public as a realist prepared to do what was necessary to uphold imperial interests. In a crucial sense, the promotion of human rights as foreign policy turned out to be window-dressing, quickly stripped away under pressure.

In comparison, Reagan's foreign policy is an ugly unmasking of what imperial geopolitics means for Third World peoples, no matter which party sends its leader to the White House. Any mainstream candidate for high public office must be generally acceptable to the national security bureaucracy, otherwise he or she will be destroyed by leaks and insinuations featured in the media, that is, made to appear lacking in 'credibility' (as happened with Henry Wallace, Gene McCarthy, George McGovern, Jerry Brown).

Human rights is inseparable from the global role of a superpower. So long as the US global role is perceived by American policy-makers as dependent on the survival of repressive regimes then the brunt of American efforts will be to help these regimes survive.

Such interventionary diplomacy is of far greater significance than debate about whether human rights should be emphasized as elements of US foreign policy. There are some real differences in effect between the Reagan and Carter approaches, but whether *any* American government can truly be a positive force on behalf of human rights remains doubtful until the United States gets out of the 'intervention business' altogether. But for that to happen American leaders would have to relax about national revolutions abroad, a prospect about as likely as expecting the CIA to turn into a lobby for liberation movements.

Presidents come and go, but bureaucratic forces and vested interests are so powerfully structured at the core of American policy-making as to make supposed shifts in direction a deep optical illusion. For human rights to be genuinely pursued requires a different foreign policy, and this cannot happen unless the hammerlock can be broken by which the national security state currently holds the democratic process in check. □

Richard Falk is Professor of International Law and Practice at Princeton University.

THIS ENGLAND

£3 book tokens for entries printed. (On postcards, please.)

□Mr Wickins said that Mark Thatcher was not becoming a full-time director or employee of BCA, but he praised the contribution he was making to the car auction company. 'He's a very bright man. He trained as an accountant and although he didn't qualify he has a very good head for figures.' — *Guardian* (J. Ibbott)

□A 10-lane racetrack for woodlice has been invented by Dr Terence Glanvill, of Honiton, Devon, who carried out experiments on woodlice as part of a course at Nottingham University. He is convinced the woodlice racing will 'take off in a big way.' He said 'They go even faster if you place a damp cloth on the track. And the thing with woodlice is that you can paint numbers on their backs to identify them.' — *Daily Telegraph* (Chris Marlow)

□However, Lord Clark's son, Mr Alan Clark, the junior Employment Minister, said yesterday that despite living in a castle littered with art treasures and even with a multi-million pound fortune: 'I always feel flat broke, we're not big spenders.' — *Observer* (Martin Fagg)

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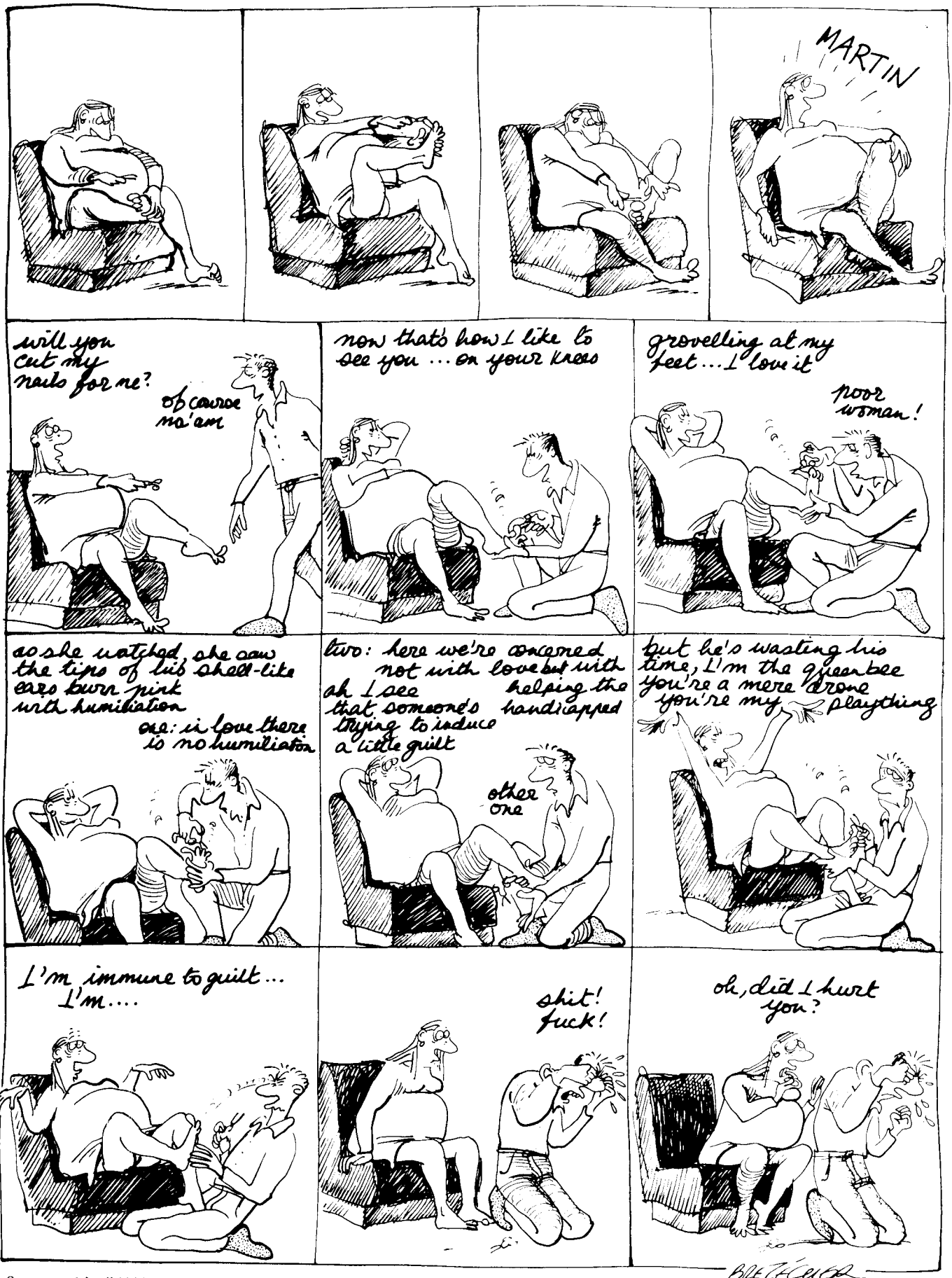
BRETECHER

SLAVE LABOUR


MARTIN
will you cut my nails for me?
of course ma'am
now that's how I like to see you ... on your knees
grovelling at my feet ... I love it
poor woman!
as she watched, she saw the tips of his shell-like ears turn pink with humiliation
one: in love there is no humiliation
two: here we're concerned not with love but with helping the handicapped
ah I see that someone's trying to induce a little guilt
other one
but he's wasting his time, I'm the queen bee you're a mere drone you're my plaything
I'm immune to guilt ... I'm ....
shit! fuck!
oh, did I hurt you?
BRETECHER

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LETTERS

Modern exploitation

Alyson Warhurst, Ines Smyth, Brighton

Ed Harriman went to Bankok to find out what is meant by 'cheap labour' in the production of clothing for export to advanced industrialised countries (*NS* 10 February). While both the article and the *World in Action* programme ('Rags to Riches', 6 February) significantly brought to public attention some of the realities of the new international division of labour, their focus was limited. We have a few comments to add.

First, Thailand is not the only country where a super-exploitation of the workforce takes place, which directly benefits large European-based companies. Millions of workers are employed as domestic outworkers or in sweatshops in the labour intensive stages of factory production in Latin American and South East Asian Free Zones and in North Africa. Furthermore, EH compares the conditions of this work to those of 19th century England. However, there is an increasing literature which shows that we don't need to go so far back in time for parallels. Today, in many Western European countries, including Britain, subcontracting to sweatshops and domestic outworkers is growing. S. Mitter and A. van Lijken have shown that such women in South East London are receiving 25 per cent of the minimum wage for domestic outworkers and that their wage rate between 1978 and 1981 has decreased by 40 per cent. Other researchers present a similar picture, and it is important to note that these women are usually from ethnic minorities.

Second, the question was never posed, in the article or in the programme, of why such workers worldwide are women and why they suffer a higher degree of exploitation of their labour power, than men. So-called 'natural attributes' — passivity, manual dexterity, propensity for repetitive work — are certainly not the explanation. Nor is slavery, as the article implies.

We need to go beyond and question the mechanisms which, in addition to defining women primarily in terms of their roles and responsibilities within the family, consistently limit their income earning opportunities.

References: (1) S. Mitter and A. van Lijken, 1973: 'A Woman's Home is her Factory', in W. Chapkis and C Enloe (eds.), *Of Common Cloth*, Transnational Institute, Amsterdam. (2) J. West (ed.), 1982: *Work, Women and the Labour Market*, Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Old codgers

Anne Smith, Edinburgh

Deirdre Spart recants . . . I didn't realise that Harold Macmillan was the best leader the Labour Party never had, and apologise for my ignorance (Letters 30 March). If anyone deserves to be a hereditary peer and a millionaire, it is surely he. But I made no special claim for miners; I made a claim for men who worked hard physically all their lives and caved in before retirement and were thrown on the scrap-heap. Many of these men will have had war records equal to that of the new Lord Stockton, for that matter. My point was about hereditary peerages; about the country choosing to honour this one privileged man while while these others are stuck in the poverty trap.

Animal rights

Kathryn Reynolds, Information Officer, Bradford Animal Rights Group

That the tabloid newspapers revel in scandal is well known. To find the same happening in your paper, I find disturbing.

Dave Harrison, in his article 'Lord Mayor in Halal furore' (*NS* 16 March), would seem to take a delight in quoting me out of context. He appears to be intent on setting one section of the community against another, and might be better employed by the paper he so frequently quotes from.

As we have done in past elections, we will be supporting candidates who give support to a variety of animal rights issues, not just those who back our campaign for compassionate slaughter.

'Equal rights for animals' can also be misunderstood. We are not suggesting that animals have the right to vote, or the right to education, but what we in animal rights firmly believe is that because an animal has an equal capacity for suffering, it has a right, equal to the human right, not to have suffering inflicted upon it.

If David Harrison is truly concerned about racial tensions in Bradford, I would suggest he uses his journalistic powers to explain clearly both sides of the pre-stunning debate. Race relations in Bradford will not be helped by trying to deny people the right to free speech.

New van for Greenham

Marna Glyn, Elizabeth Nussbaum, Alan Thornhill, London SW15

The people who responded so generously to our appeal in your letters column on 16 March for support for the Greenham women will be pleased to know that we were able to buy a van and deliver it last week, and more sleeping bags etc. are also being provided. The women at the gate where we handed the van over were delighted, and we are now hoping to raise enough money to get a vehicle for one of the other gates where there is a desperate need.

Pacts and alliances

Ivor Crewe, University of Essex

Peter Kellner made an uncharacteristic slip when referring to my *Guardian* article on a Labour-Alliance electoral pact (*NS* 30 March). He writes that 'the price Labour would pay is the surrender of *any* chance of winning power on its own'. Not so. The two pacts I described were expressly designed to ensure that Labour's chance of winning an overall majority was not diminished by one jot; in fact one of them, 'super pact', makes it fractionally easier. Labour and Alliance supporters alike can no doubt find numerous political objections to a pact, but the purely electoral advantages to both sides are, in my view, overwhelming.

Crass romanticism

Dora Russell, Porthcurno, Penzance, Cornwall

Germaine Greer is not the first person to trim her sails in order to be in good standing in the new Thatcherite climate of opinion (*NS* 16 March); nor is she the first to use India as a means of romantic escapes from our technological civilisation.

There were the generation of dropouts who went to Katmandu to learn meditation, very many of whom ended up as drug addicts drifting about the Indian scene. Then came the others in search of gurus, abandoning home and family to listen to agreeable voices; thus so enriching the owner of one such voice, who now possesses extensive lands in the United States, and, it is said, three luxurious cars. If there is something wrong here at home, surely the task is to seek means of putting things to rights instead of running away from it all.

The birth control campaign was not due to dislike of children, or to the population question; it was on behalf of those very mothers Germaine Greer, like other sentimentalists, professes to admire, who were in fact subservient to husbands, and to unlimited children as well as factory labour, and the least cared for in our population, while feminists fought for the right to live and work like men.

For the record

Matthew Campbell, London NW1

An error crept into my article 'Police strikeforce' (*NS* 23 March). It was the Association of Chief Police Officers who opposed the 1980 Employment Act on the grounds stated, whereas the Police Federation wanted an extension of criminal sanctions to strengthen their hand on the picket line.

NO POLICE BILL
NO POLICE STATE

Black and Irish people, gays and lesbians, Greenham Women, NGA pickets . . . and now the miners. Who's next? The Police Bill will legalise and extend already repressive police powers. It must be stopped.

NATIONAL MARCH TO OPPOSE THE POLICE BILL
Hyde Park (Speakers Corner) to Jubilee Gardens
Saturday 19 May (assemble 12 noon)
Speakers from Labour Party, Trade Unionists, Greenham Women, GLC, Black & Irish organisations, gay & lesbian groups

HALF DAY WORKSHOP: 'DEFENDING DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS'
Thursday 26 April
1pm, Camden Town Hall, Euston Road, NW1

LABOUR MOVEMENT CONFERENCE TO OPPOSE THE POLICE BILL
Saturday 12 May
1pm, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, WC1
Speakers from Labour Party, NUM, NGA, CPSA, NUR and others

***Details:** The National Campaign Against the Police Bill, 50 Rectory Road, London N16 7QY (01-249 8334)*

Public rally
Free Sarah Tisdall
Fight for the Right to Know
Speakers so far: **Carol Harwood, Clare Hudson, Aidan White** *(Guardian)*, **Paul Foot** *(Daily Mirror)*, **Duncan Campbell** *(New Statesman)*, **Larry Gostin** *(NCCL)*, **Des Wilson** *(Freedom of Information)*.
Come and show your support at **Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, 7.30pm, Thursday 5 April**
Organised by The Socialist Society
Sponsored by the NCCL and *New Statesman*.
For further details phone Lynne Amidon on 01-734 8501.

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Christopher Priest

Buried talents

IN *THE GLORY OF THE GARDEN* it is announced that Arts Council support of literature in 1985/'86 will be reduced to £450,000. The allocation for the previous year was £898,500. According to the Council, this will produce a saving from literature of £350,000. I'm sure that somewhere there is a logical universe in which this arithmetic makes sense, but it's not the one I inhabit.

Looking back over Arts Council annual reports since 1971/'72 I was struck by the recurring vagueness of the sums, and the virtual impossibility of checking them. This is not to imply any wrongdoing, or even wilful obscurity, but to reflect that the whole subject of subsidies, guarantees and grants is so complex that much of the Arts Council's arithmetic has to be taken on trust by ordinary mortals.

Behind the complicated figurework lies the attitude to literature spending, and this is of course far more important, although sometimes just as difficult to follow. There is no need at this late stage to go over the record of literature support given by Charles Osborne (Director of the Literature Department since 1971 and Assistant Director before that), because it has been well monitored over the years.

But, broadly speaking, the last 15 years have seen a shift in policy from grants and bursaries paid directly to writers to a more general policy of aiding publishers, magazines and bookshops. (In an article in the *Guardian* in November last year, Mr Osborne pointed out that the Council does not pay bursaries to actors, but supports the companies who employ them, and the same policy should hold for writers.) Yet in recent months even this seems to have changed again, there being much élitist talk about the difference between books and literature. To take one example, there is an objection within the Literature Department to continued support for the National Book League because it is said that the NBL deals with books, not literature.

Fortunately, a definition of literature is to hand. Marghanita Laski, Chairman of the Literature Panel, has explained that literature funding today means introducing the work of Robert Browning to a new audience. (Mr Osborne would clearly agree: in 1981 he expressed the hope that the Council could begin a scheme of re-issuing literature of the past.) The inherent muddles in such thinking, the contradictions and lack of real direction, speak for themselves.

The function of the Arts Council is first of all to defend and support the arts by obtaining from government as much money as possible, then, secondly, by expertise and intelligence, distributing the money to the places where it is needed and where it will contribute most to the artistic environment of the country.

Quite apart from his muddles, Mr Osborne has several times said publicly that for literature money is not a problem, but that ways of spending it are. Earlier this year, amid authoritative revelations that large amounts of the literature allocation were not being spent, Mr Osborne reported that a 'standstill' budget would be acceptable to him, and for 1984/'85 this is exactly what he got. In 1985/'86 his budget is to be halved (as he has not resigned, we must assume that this is also satisfactory to him), and still he seems unable to concede that he is presiding over a major decline in support for the art form in his charge.

The two most serious deficiencies in the Literature Department are — and there is evidence — that the expert advice from external reports, and from the Literature Panel itself, is misinterpreted or disregarded, and that the overall perception of the *needs* of literature is demonstrably weak.

Colin Wheeler

On this second matter, a representative example exists in the new report. The writer of the report, comparing literature with the Royal Opera House, says: 'English literature, on the other hand, is sustained by a large and profitable commercial publishing industry.' In other words, without massive subsidy we would have no opera, but literature can fend for itself.

This is a false analogy. True, British publishing *is* profitable, taken as a whole. The book trade is a major employer, directly and indirectly, and produces a huge export income. But the publishing industry is not a conglomerate, and consists of hundreds of individual firms. As Mr Osborne is so fond of reminding us, not all books are literature. Almost without exception, the few firms which *are* initiating and encouraging literary works are small, privately owned and often under-capitalised. During the last two or three years, several of these small publishers have suffered in the recession, postponing or cancelling titles and making staff redundant.

I am *not* suggesting that the Arts Council should be subsidising such firms; the real point is that the report's generalisation is misleading, inaccurate and reveals a fundamental misconception.

The salaried officials who administer the funding are supposed to draw on the expertise of voluntary panels for advice. The autocratic dealings of the Literature Director with his own panel have been revealed recently by Michael Church in the *Sunday Times*, and no more need be added. To a lesser extent, the departments also seek external advice by commissioning studies and reports.

In 1978, the Arts Council commissioned a report from Mr Jim McGuigan into the effects on writers of direct grants. Although the report was completed in 1979 it was not published until 1981. Before it was published, the Literature Department changed its grants policy — reducing writers' awards that year to a total of five — and Mr Osborne announced that the report demonstrated that:

> Although the recipients undoubtedly appreciated them, no books were written with the aid of such grants which would not have been written without them. In any case, the current situation is not one in which books have to be coaxed into existence. There are too many books, and they are chasing too few readers.
>
> (*The Author*, Spring 1981)

Mr McGuigan himself said that this decision was 'extraordinary' and that 'too little money was distributed in too narrow and unimaginative a way'. When the actual report was published, it could be seen that Mr

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McGuigan's recommendations were far more complex and extensive than Mr Osborne's summary had implied, and that none of the other recommendations — such as an increase in the Department's staff, aid for first novels, self-application for grants — had been acted on.

A more recent report was commissioned in 1982, and delivered in May last year. This, written by Mr Charles Landry, was to investigate the possibility that, with Arts Council help, literary magazines could be distributed and marketed more effectively and thus, by increasing their circulations, reduce the need for direct subsidy. Some of these subsidies are huge: *London Magazine* has received £194,000 in the last seven years alone. The Landry Report was not sent out to client magazines until four days before the Arts Council meeting on 28 March, and then without the recommendations. How long before the Landry Report is made public?

The apparent failure of the Literature Department so far has been indecision about its exact role, and a lack of will to finance properly. The current insistence that books and literature are different entities can and should be heeded, although not perhaps with Ms Laski's peculiar interpretation. Books are the merchandise produced by all publishers; literature is the artistic activity practised by serious writers. Literature can be partly quantified by the actual copies of the books in which it appears, but its true nature is the composition of the written word and the intellectual climate which encourages composition.

Whether or not Mr Osborne believes this, the harsh fact is that most serious writers are generally broke, and those who are from time to time not broke lack the long-term security to be able to devote the right amount of time to their work. Serious writers are driven into distracting secondary occupations — teaching, journalism, reviewing and general non-literary jobs — simply to keep a roof over their heads. In the end, the Literature Department will have to face up to this, and if it lacks the confidence to know which writers are worth supporting, then the advisory panel's recommendations must be heeded. It is surely not impossible to take each case on its individual merits, and make responsible judgments.

If Mr Osborne feels he is unable to administer such a policy, then there is an alternative course open to him. □

THE PRESS
Phillip Whitehead

A table for six

The Rise and Fall of the Political Press in Britain: Vol. 2 The Twentieth Century
STEPHEN KOSS *Hamish Hamilton* £25

Stephen Koss is the last of the Edwardians, happiest in the world that ended with Lloyd George. The second volume of his prodigious history of the political press in Britain is meticulously researched. But because he believes that newspapers have 'substituted what may be called political dispositions for what had been formal party allegiances' his definition of a political press is a narrow one. The result is a penny-farthing of a book. The vast, slowly turning machinery of Lloyd George, wherein the House of Lords became 'the real and rightful Newspaper Proprietors Association', dwarfs the small, speeded up account of our own times. On the 600th page we read of the fall of Chamberlain; 80 pages later the tale comes to an end with an uncritical look at Rupert Murdoch. It is true that 'squaring and squashing' is done differently now, and that newspapers, with the exception of the *Morning Star,* do not see themselves as agents of party, over and beyond commercial considerations. It is true, but it is not the whole truth.

Things were different in the Edwardian twilight. Koss shows in immense detail how the complex combination of appeals to party loyalty and financial *douceurs* actually worked. Laundered money from a clutch of grandees and plutocrats found its way to the Tory press through the Unionist Chief Whip, Steel-Maitland. In this way — doing the party a favour — was the Canadian adventurer Max Aitken first introduced to the *Daily Express.* The Liberals replied in kind, through their Chief Whip the Master of Elibank, with the connivance of Asquith. Lloyd George was simply better, and more blatant, at the game when his turn came. On both sides 'however bitterly they might grumble, leader writers were obliged to do the bidding of editors, and editors of proprietors'. Lloyd George set out to create a client press. Proprietors were brought into the government to flatter them. (Northcliffe, sailing for the US with the appropriately lunatic title of Minister Plenipotentiary, wired back his orders: 'it is essential that not one line of criticism of the United States, men, books or anything else, should appear in the *Daily Mail*'.) Editors who crossed Lloyd George from within the Liberal camp, as Donald of the *Daily Chronicle* did, found their papers bought over their heads by the Prime Minister's cronies.

By the time of the Coupon Election Lloyd George's power over the press was widely feared and denounced, especially by the Asquithian Liberals. 'A dinner table for six will seat all of the men who control nine-tenths of the press opinion of the country' thundered Gardiner in the *Daily News* — to be sacked for his pains by his perennially gutless proprietors the Cadburys. But in 1922 the six did not save Lloyd George; most of them had already deserted his table for more austere fare with Mr Bonar Law. The 'dynamic force' had been destroyed by his own monstrous allies, but, as Koss points out, they had not created *him.* His newsworthiness always counted for more than his news management, the dynamic more than the devious elements in his style. Just as Northcliffe could switch sides and causes, so he knew that the sensational rather than the sententious sold newspapers. 'Interest more people. Remember the women,' he minuted J.L. Garvin, in a prolonged complaint about too much 'heavy politics'.

Professor Koss shows how direct party loyalties declined in the Thirties. The fortunes of parties and the papers most overtly tied to them often varied inversely. The *Daily Herald* had earned whingeing rebukes from MacDonald even before his apostacy; it reached its circulation peak in its giveaway and gimmicks phase after the Labour eclipse of 1931. Conversely the *Morning Post,* briefly distilled into its own essence by Churchill's *British Gazette* in the General Strike, went into terminal decline during the Conservative hegemony and was absorbed by the *Daily Telegraph* in 1936. I suspect that Koss would like to leave it there, with the press lords trying to play the political game themselves and coming famously unstuck. Editors came into their own again. The political weeklies took over from the old leader writers much of the function of direct political comment.

Unfortunately the next 40 years, 'an unremitting story of crisis, closure and complaint', lead to a different conclusion from the rather lame one he draws. The accumulation of media power into fewer hands is covered at breakneck speed. The first Royal Commission on the Press gets a page, the second a paragraph, the third a sentence. The story of the betrayal and butchery of the *News Chronicle* (circulation at closure 1,206,000) and the *Daily Herald* (circulation at closure 1,300,000) is better told, especially the former. The old device of turning to the party whips to rustle up funds for a rescue bid was impossible by the Sixties. Avoidance of the embrace of Rothermere and Murdoch was not. It is a process which continues apace, and the story should disenchant those disposed to believe the 'guarantees' we have been given for the *Daily Mirror.* Koss draws comfort from the fact that television (which he otherwise ignores) has helped to make the press more pragmatic, less partisan, as the remaining newspapers look to their survival.

Quoting Crossman and Crosland to his purpose, Professor Koss would have us believe that the proprietors and their press are both less powerful and less sinister than many on the Left think. Most press reviewers will seize on this comfortable conclusion. Public broadcasting has certainly established new terms of reference for the reporting of events. But look at it another way. The power of the press lord, once in decline, has risen again. His newspaper has now become a multi-media conglomerate, and he can be rewarded in ways far more subtle than the old subventions from the whips. Our monopolies legislation is a joke. The table is still set for the six men who control Fleet Street, and a fine repast they have had, nationally and internationally. With satellite communications the sky is no longer the limit. Few read the first leader, but everyone sees the sub-editing and photojournalism of the front page. Professor Koss should have completed his research during the last election when we saw a political press of a different kind in action.

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It is true that commentators now contend and contradict each other in the pages of the press. It is also true that the present proprietors are a poor lot. But is there a real plurality, an opening of minds? This valedictory rebuke appeared in the week Professor Koss's book was published:

> Most of the press . . . is generally so preoccupied with reinforcing everything the Government tries to do that all activity is assessed by its helpfulness to that enterprise. . . [Newspapers] are wide open to public disbelief. . . better exponents of servile enthusiasm than open-minded rigour.

These are not the words of Mr Benn, but of Hugo Young, Political Editor of the *Sunday Times,* a man of the moderate right. The problem, he said, was not one of markets but of ownership. 'It is to the narrow, essentially anti-journalistic interests of owners that we owe the deadly narrowness of the modern press.' He resigned, of course. Columnists like editors can be 'deposed on account of their excellence'. We have a political press of a new kind. Professor Koss should come back to record it. □

THE MEDIA
Loretta Loach

Avoiding conflict

Ireland: The Propaganda War
LIZ CURTIS *Pluto* £5.50

Without wishing to point to a conspiracy, it is undoubtedly the case that the social and economic crisis of the last decade has produced profound and widespread infringements of our civil and political liberties. Even more disturbing is the fact that this has occurred entirely within the framework of our constitution and therefore has an apparent legitimacy which confuses and cons even the wisest among us.

The recent use of the Official Secrets Act is just one end of the sliding scale of strengthening state control. At the other, is the 'normalisation' of repressive procedures which has characterised government strategy in the north of Ireland since the mid-Seventies. In 1977 the Secrets Act was extended in the North to take in members of public bodies concerned with education, health and housing. Underpinning this strategy, if ambiguously nevertheless effectively, are craven media with an abysmal record on responsible coverage of the Northern Ireland conflict. This book proves that assertion. It chronicles the iniquities and, by implication, alerts us to the wider and increasingly important considerations of press and broadcasting freedom in Britain today.

Liz Curtis has given us an extremely meticulous and thoroughly researched book with numerous examples of distortion, misinformation and, in the case of the tabloids, often complete fabrication of news. There is the interview with Bernadette McAliskey while she was in a coma! There is the case where Dr Robert Irwin, a police surgeon at Castlereagh interrogation centre, gave evidence in support of allegations of brutality there and became the subject of a vicious and destructive smear campaign by the RUC. We hear how the security forces regularly flood the media with statements which are often given uncritical attention. This happened when a 12-year-old girl was shot dead by a British paratrooper and British newspapers repeated only army accounts of her death. They said she was killed in crossfire. Later it emerged she was shot by two bullets fired by the paratrooper and no other shots had been fired.

There are the cases like at Carrickmore in 1979 where a BBC *Panorama* team filmed an IRA roadblock. This created a tremendous furore in establishment circles and an all Commons attack against the BBC. This in turn led to a series of guidelines and regulations referred to as the 'reference upwards system' whereby every programme idea on the subject of Northern Ireland has to be scrutinised by staff at the highest editorial levels. The system has encouraged self-censorship and a situation in which, 'for every programme that gets banned there are about twenty that don't get made'.

In her conclusion, Liz Curtis says 'those in positions of power both in Government and in the media, have proved most reluctant to provide a full picture of events in the North'. This being the case, any notion of true democracy operating to form public policy on matters relating to the conflict in the North of Ireland is pure nonsense. Let us hope that the tragedy of Britain's Irish coverage is not repeated. This book will certainly make us vigilant; it is such a powerful indictment and rumour has it that the orders from the BBC are arriving in surprising quantities.

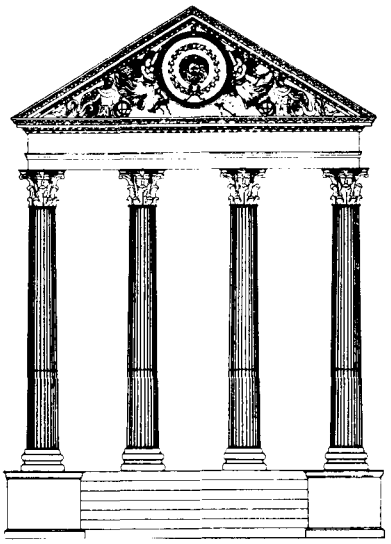
APOLOGIA
James Bentley

Thin links

The Two Cities
NORMAN ST JOHN-STEVAS *Faber* £12.95

Never was an ego so effectively punctured as Norman St John-Stevas's when Margaret Thatcher abruptly dismissed him from her cabinet in January 1981. With her customary ineptness the prime minister revealed on Thames TV the following day her hopes that she had now stopped damaging leaks from the cabinet to the press. Angrily Norman forced an apology out of her. And then there was silence.

This apologia is clearly an attempt to re-establish St John-Stevas not only as a political force but also a heavyweight Tory philosopher. His title challenges comparison with St Augustine's renowned *City of God*. 'St Augustine placed the earthly and heavenly cities in stark juxtaposition,' observes St John-Stevas. 'I see them rather as breathing together, a true *conspiratio*, one penetrating the other, and resting on the same base — the love of God.'



Fully Revised Edition

Roman Bath Discovered
Barry Cunliffe

Professor Cunliffe's highly readable history was first published in 1971. Since that time there have been extensive and dramatic new discoveries. In this new, fully revised edition, Barry Cunliffe traces the history from the first remarkable discovery of the gilded bronze head of the cult statue of Sulis Minerva found in the eighteenth century to the most recent excavations of Minerva's temple completed by the author in 1983.
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0 7102 0196 6 £14.95

The Chronicle programme *Bath Waters* on Barry Cunliffe's discoveries was shown on BBC 2 27th March.

A Cup of News
The Life of Thomas Nashe
Charles Nicholl

'The satirists of Elizabethan London make our present-day crew seem namby-pamby, and the investigative journalism of the 1590's had a thrust to it that makes Private Eye look like cap-and-bells stuff . . . Charles Nicholl gives us a rare glimpse of this dark world of pamphleteers, the fore-runners of Grub Street, who hung around among the cutpurses and sideshows inside St Paul's Cathedral while their printers operated in the Cathedral's shadow.' – David Holloway, *Daily Telegraph*
9¾ × 6¼ ins, illustrated,
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His own views on how the two cities interpenetrate are, unfortunately, painfully thin, apart from a few insights culled from the American protestant Reinhold Niebuhr (who was indeed a fine moral philosopher, but whose principal work was done over 50 years ago). Far more interesting is his account of his life and work in the secular city, particularly his experience of working for both Edward Heath and Margaret Thatcher as Minister for the Arts. Seeing himself as 'a trustee of the possibilities of civilisation', St John-Stevas decided that at a time of financial stringency the chief reason for the existence of an Arts Minister was to fight for money. Injured in a car crash on the M1, he limped into Margaret Thatcher's office hoping to melt her heart and resolve three disputed points in favour of the arts. 'I carried two, but by the time we got to the third the Prime Minister's sympathy had evaporated, and I and my argument were dismissed from the presence.'

After his dismissal from the cabinet he was, he records, dispirited, depressed and wounded. However, he drew strength from the Pauline precept that all things work together for good to them that love God. 'God does write straight but sometimes with crooked lines,' he observes, adding that 'time is not only the great healer but the great revealer as well'. By October 1981 he was ready to fight back. In an address to the Tory Reform Group at the annual party conference he urged three points on his fellow Conservatives: the party must abandon its new extremism and return to 'the centre ground'; to subordinate men and women to economic materialism is immoral; compassion should be the mainspring of Tory politics.

I found one curious omission in the speech as printed here. Commenting on Mrs Thatcher's style, St John-Stevas said, 'The foolish advice given to her by sections of the Press, including I regret to say the once sagacious *Economist*, to try and construct a Cabinet of only one point of view has already proved damagingly counter-productive.' Now in his time Norman St John-Stevas has earned a shilling or two writing for the *Economist*. In the revised version of the speech, his criticism of that newspaper is silently omitted.

St John-Stevas isn't as careful with facts as he should be. Nor is he as ecumenical as he would have us believe. In fact his attitude to the non-Roman Catholic churches is powerfully insensitive. The visit of Pope John Paul II, he tells us, was 'the most important religious event in Britain since the Reformation'. So much for John Wesley. When in Canterbury cathedral the Pope embraced virtually every member of the Anglican bench of bishops, St John-Stevas judges that 'at that moment the Anglican Communion was caught up into the Universal Church', forgetting that Anglicans and most Protestants hold themselves to be members of the Universal Church without any special help from the papacy.

He confesses here his sorrow that, because he is a wit, people get the impression that he isn't serious in his approach. Many visiting his exquisite house in Montpelier Square, with its beautiful lavatory, stuffed birds, Victoriana and Papal memorabilia, must have wondered whether there was anything behind such a facade. On the evidence of this book there isn't a lot.

JOURNALISM
Anne Smith

If you were a woman

Outrageous Acts and Everyday Rebellions
GLORIA STEINEM *Cape* £8.95

Gloria Steinem is an American feminist journalist, co-founder of *Ms.* and *New York*; *Outrageous Acts* is a selection from the articles she wrote, mainly for *Ms.*, between 1963 and 1982. In her introduction Steinem explains and illustrates the conventional editorial attitudes to which *Ms.* and her own work are a challenge and an antidote:

> At *The Ladies' Home Journal*... one of its two top editors (both men of course) was so convinced that I was nothing like its readers (whom he described as 'mental defectives with curlers in their hair') that he used to hand me a manuscript and say, 'Pretend you're a woman and read this.'

The most engaging feature of this collection, apart from its maturity and humour, is Steinem's habit of turning the world outside-in at the stroke of a pen, in her own observations and in snappy anecdote. She tells for example how, when she and a friend were discussing the friend's book on abortion in the back of a Boston taxi, the elderly Irish woman driver commented, 'Honey, if men could get pregnant, abortion would be a sacrament.'

This notion is picked up and extended later in a sharp, hilarious piece entitled 'If Men Could Menstruate'. For a start, Steinem suggests, 'They would brag about how long and how much'. She goes on to imagine 'Paul Newman Tampons' and 'John Wayne Maxi Pads'; street-slang — 'He's a three-pad man' — and so on through to the inevitable 'menses-envy'.

She writes of her own efforts to fit into 'the proper grown-up and womanly role, whether that means finding a well-to-do man to be supported by or a male radical to support'. She points out that 'sons-in-law may be the ones who really sleep their way to power'. In a piece about women's college reunions she recalls how a Washington woman reporter told her she was writing an article 'on why so many women of accomplishment had gone to Smith College'. 'Like who?' Steinem asked. 'Like Nancy Reagan and Barbara Bush,' was the reply, to which Steinem rejoined, 'Do you think a reporter is interviewing Mr Thatcher's schoolmates to find out how they were trained to marry a chief of state? Is Mr Thatcher one of the top men in England?'

Gloria Steinem: 'turning the world outside-in'

She throws new light on some of the glamorous women who seem to symbolise everything that their mentally-defective sisters in hair curlers, those avid consumers of the ubiquitous guides to nest-making and husband-control which masquerade as 'women's magazines', want to be. There is the story of Judy Holliday's movie interview at which, after being chased round the desk by the lecherous head of the studio, Holliday 'just reached into her dress, pulled out her falsies, and handed them to him. "Here," she said, "I think this is what you want." ' She tells how Marilyn Monroe persuaded a night-club owner to hire Ella Fitzgerald despite his no-blacks policy by promising to take a front table for every performance, which she duly did.

Steinem links the struggle for racial equality with the struggle for sexual equality, arguing that women and coloureds have been conned and bullied all through history into providing a support-system for the supreme white male. Her political reportage is rivetting. Newspapers could make political campaigns vastly more interesting to the public if they adopted her technique of concentrating on the characters of those who offer themselves as our leaders, rather than on their images; if they told us what was really said on campaign buses and planes, rather than what is handed out, predictably and repetitively, for the consumption of the voter. A casual comment such as the one she quotes from a colleague, talking about Nixon, can be worth a thousand words of 'analysis':

> Maybe he doesn't use the Western Behavioral Institute the way Reagan did, you know, and came out with all the positions that would fit a basically conservative frame of mind; Reagan just took out the card file when we asked him questions.

In a collection that ranges widely and with brilliant clarity from articles on Linda Lovelace (a shocker) to Alice Walker (the best review of *The Color Purple* I've ever read), to pieces on the sexual politics of conversation, little facts are constantly popping up to surprise, horrify or amuse: Americans spend $8 billion a year on pornography (Steinem makes a valuable distinction between pornography and erotica); the increase in male impotence which was blamed on working wives and turned out to be a side-effect of medication for high blood pressure; or just the fact that *Ms.* had a hard job 'convincing advertisers that women look at ads for shampoo without the accompanying articles on how to wash their hair, just as men look at ads for shaving products without articles on how to shave.'

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All this and much, much more, as they say — including the famous piece, 'I Was a Playboy Bunny'. My only criticism of this fascinating collection is that it is a pity Ms Steinem did not take the time to make a real book of it, rather than simply collecting her best in one place. So many links might have been made across articles, to even greater effect.

ARTS
Mervyn Jones

Glut or famine?

The Culture Club: Crisis in the Arts
BRYAN APPLEYARD *Faber* £2.95

This book is a curious hodge-podge. It contains some lively reporting on the present state of the arts; some profiles, with quotes from interviews, of members of 'the culture club' such as Roy Strong and Melvyn Bragg; and some bold, self-confident theorising. The theorising ought to be the most welcome part of the book, since we badly need a reconsideration of where we stand at a time when the impulse of modernism seems to be flagging. Unfortunately, logical thinking isn't Bryan Appleyard's strong point. Here, for example, is just one of the assertions that sound well until you examine them:

> The successful novel may now express impotence or terror before the shock of the new, but it must do so in the forms of 100 years ago. Of course, under such conditions it can have only one possible message to deliver: that the abyss can be safely assimilated, that all manner of things shall be well.

The first part of this dictum would appear to mean that successful novelists like Golding, Rushdie, Bradbury or Weldon are employing — must employ — techniques that would have been familiar to readers in 1884. This patently isn't so. The other sentence asks us to envisage writers who simultaneously 'express impotence or terror' and reassure us that we can assimilate the abyss. A writer could scarcely do both, and I can't think of a contemporary writer who does the latter — if, that's to say, assimilating is something you can feasibly do with an abyss.

In this passage, and in others throughout the book, there is also an ambiguity about the concept of success: are we talking about writers (or painters or musicians) who sell well, set a fashion and are esteemed by 'the culture club', or about artists of genuine achievement? Appleyard has, though he never pauses to define it, a concept of 'art' as a precious and self-sufficing entity. Sometimes he opposes it to 'craft' and sometimes he doesn't — 'I am discussing art, not crafts' (page 15), but 'Art in the traditional, craft-based sense is back' (page 96). Sometimes he opposes 'art' to 'the arts', and it's particularly hard to follow this distinction, since most of us say 'the arts' to denote varied, and equally valid, forms or expressions of art.

However, what he is most strongly against is an assumption held by the people referred to here and there as 'the mandarins' or 'the soft humanist Left', and specifically by the Arts Council (the fact that the key posts are now held by Tories and Catholics doesn't seem to make much difference). This assumption is that 'the arts are good and that people should get more of them'. This would be all right, Appleyard says, 'if occasionally the end-products were self-evidently and self-consciously works of genius'. You'll observe an elision between the end-products in general and the works of genius. I'm not aware that Keynes or Jennie Lee or Lord Goodman, or any other of the presiding figures of the Arts Council, ever conceived of it or justified it as a seed-bed for works of genius.

Genius is a mysterious quality; probably there have been no more than 100 unarguable men or women of genius in human history, and that's including philosophers and scientists as well as artists. It is possible to have a healthy and fertile artistic environment without the appearance of a single genius — an example would be the musical culture of the mid-19th century. Thus, the absence of works of genius is no argument against people getting more of the arts. Still, it's generally true that the pinnacles of genius are reached in quantitatively productive periods: Shakespeare amid a lot of plays, Beethoven amid a lot of music, Tolstoy amid a lot of novels.

If this is so, it's remarkably perverse of Appleyard to argue that the trouble with the arts is their excessive productivity, and that public policy is at fault in encouraging it. For he does argue, or more accurately assert, that 'the real disease is a kind of obesity'. Painting a fulsome picture of the support lavished on artists of all kinds, and airily tossing out round figures with a vagueness surprising in a former financial journalist, he concludes that the arts 'are enjoying a period of unprecedented wealth'.

You could have fooled me, and you could have fooled the people who have to run the theatres and galleries, making rueful comparisons with the funds available in other European countries. For them, the disease isn't obesity but malnutrition. It would be unjust to reproach Appleyard, whose book has been produced with commendable speed, for giving no details of the 1984 cuts and threatened closures, but it's fair to recall that the climate for quite some time has been one of apprehension.

Is there no cause, therefore, for what Appleyard censoriously calls 'the constant grumbles of the arts world'? Is it that artists are always grumbling, like the traditional farmer? This isn't exactly what Appleyard is saying. As he interprets it, artists are right to feel worried but don't understand the sources of their anxiety. They should know that 'their complaint is the malaise of affluence'.

From what one hears, Lord Gowrie is a nice man with a genuine enthusiasm for the arts — perhaps even for 'art' — who would like nothing better than to preside over a period of expansion in public endowment, and is distressed by having to wield the axe. This book ought to make him feel better, supplying as it does a justification for the relief of obesity. I doubt, however, if many other people will find it convincing.

NEW FROM PICADOR

THE BOOK OF THE CITY OF LADIES
Christine de Pizan
'This is the first known book written in French by a woman on women'
TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT
'If anyone in Paris in 1405 was writing with a word processor and database, it must have been Christine de Pizan. . . A considerable retrieval from women's hidden history'
TIME OUT
HARDBACK £8.95 PAPERBACK £2.95

BLOOD AND GUTS IN HIGH SCHOOL Plus Two
Kathy Acker
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'A fierce anger pervades every chapter' *QUENTIN CRISP, THE TATLER*
'Steamy modernist fiction meets seamy romantic ideals head on' *CITY LIMITS*
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Gregor von Rezzori
'His anti-semitism seems to be largely a matter of ignorance and snobbery. Yet, as he describes himself, he is inordinately obsessed by Jews. . . he writes so well' *NEW STATESMAN*
HARDBACK £8.95 PAPERBACK £2.95

IT'S ME, EDDIE
A fictional Memoir
Edward Limonov
'The freewheeling, sad and funny account of his life and sexual exploits on the streets and between the sheets of New York, with men and women, strangers and beloveds' *DUNCAN CAMPBELL, SUNDAY TIMES*
HARDBACK £7.95 PAPERBACK £2.95

THE WORDS TO SAY IT
Marie Cardinal
'The best account of psychoanalysis as seen and experienced by the patient' *BRUNO BETTELHEIM*
'One of the most remarkable books I have ever read' *INGMAR BERGMAN*
HARDBACK £7.95 PAPERBACK £2.95

PICADOR IN SIMULTANEOUS HARDBACK AND PAPERBACK

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Selected spring and summer books

The books listed below are a selection from those which publishers hope to issue between now and the end of September. Some prices are provisional. Titles already announced are not included.

Fiction

KINGSLEY AMIS **Stanley and the Women** *Hutchinson* £7.95
PAT BARKER **Blow Your House Down** *Virago* about £8.95 & £3.50
STAN BARSTOW **The Glad Eye: Short Stories** *Michael Joseph* £8.95
SAUL BELLOW **Him With His Foot In His Mouth and Other Stories** *Secker* £8.95
PAUL BINDING **Harmonica's Bridegroom** *Aidan Ellis* £7.95
BREYTEN BREYTENBACH **Mouroir: Mirrornotes of a Novel** *Faber* about £8.95
WILLIAM BURROUGHS **The Place of Dead Roads** *John Calder* £8.95
SHUSAKU ENDO **Stained Glass Elegies** *Peter Owen* £7.95
ELAINE FEINSTEIN **The Border** *Hutchinson* £7.95
ALASDAIR GRAY **1982, Janine** *Cape* £8.95
DAVID HUGHES **The Pork Butcher** *Constable* £5.95
GLYN HUGHES **The Hawthorn Goddess** *Chatto* £8.95
R. C. HUTCHINSON **The Quixotes: Collected Stories,** edited by Robert Green *Carcanet* £8.95
DAVID IRELAND **Burn** *Angus & Robertson* £3.95
THOMAS KENEALLY **The Cut-Rate Kingdom** *Allen Lane* £8.95
MILAN KUNDERA **The Unbearable Lightness of Being** *Faber* about £7.95
SHENA MACKAY **A Bowl of Cherries** *Harvester* £7.95
BERNARD MACLAVERTY **Secrets** *Allison & Busby* £7.95 & £2.95
ALLAN MASSIE **One Night In Winter** *Bodley Head* £7.95
MICHAEL MOORCOCK **The Laughter of Carthage** *Secker* £8.95
SHIVA NAIPAUL **A Man Of Mystery and Other Pieces** *Hamish Hamilton* £8.95
JOYCE CAROL OATES **The Mysteries of Winterthur** *Cape* £9.95
MARGE PIERCY **Fly Away Home** *Chatto* £8.95
JAMES PURDY **Mourners Below** *Peter Owen* £8.95
ALAIN ROBBE-GRILLET **Recollections of the Golden Triangle** *John Calder* £4.95
JOSEPH ROTH **The Emperor's Tomb** *Chatto* £7.95 & £3.95
A. L. ROWSE **Night at the Carn and Other Stories** *Wm Kimber* £6.95
CAROLYN SLAUGHTER **A Perfect Woman** *Allen Lane* £7.95
MURIEL SPARK **The Only Problem** *Bodley Head* £6.95
DAVID STOREY **Present Times** *Cape* £8.95
PAUL THEROUX **Doctor Slaughter** *Hamish Hamilton* £7.95
D. M. THOMAS **Swallow** *Gollancz* £8.95
SUE TOWNSEND **The Growing Pains of Adrian Mole** *Methuen* about £4.95
JILL TWEEDIE **Bliss** *Heinemann* £8.95
JOHN UPDIKE **The Witches of Eastwick** *Deutsch* about £8.95
SYLVIA TOWNSEND WARNER **One Thing Leading to Another** *Chatto* £8.95
KEITH WATERHOUSE **Thinks** *Michael Joseph* £8.95
H. G. WELLS **The Man With A Nose and Other Uncollected Short Stories** *Athlone* £9.95
MARGUERITE YOURCENAR **The Abyss** *Aidan Ellis* £8.95

Poetry

JAMES BERRY (Ed.) **News for Babylon: The Chatto Book of Westindian-British Poetry** £4.95
E. E. CUMMINGS **The Unpublished Poems** *Norton* £13.75 & £6.25
PHILIP GROSS **The Ice Factory** *Faber* about £3.25
TONY HARRISON **Dramatic Verse 1973-1983** *Bloodaxe Books* £12.95 & £5.95
SELIMA HILL **Saying Hello At The Station** *Chatto* £2.95
MIROSLAV HOLUB **On The Contrary** *Bloodaxe Books* £8.95 & £4.95
MEDBH MCGUCKIAN **Venus and the Rain** *Oxford* £4.50
JOHN MOLE **In and Out of the Apple** *Secker* £5.95
JOHN MONTAGUE **The Dead Kingdom** *Oxford* £4.95
ANTHONY THWAITE **Poems 1953-1983** *Secker* £8.95
DEREK WALCOTT **Midsummer** *Faber* about £3.95

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AUTOBIOGRAPHY
Simon Frith

Innocent at home

Scouse Mouse
GEORGE MELLY *Weidenfeld* £8.95

George Melly is giving us his life in snatches. His first volume, *Owning Up*, covered the 1950s, his second, *Rum, Bum and Concertina*, the 1940s, and *Scouse Mouse* takes him from birth to puberty in 1930s Liverpool. Melly explains this idiosyncratic reversal of biographical practice with an aphorism — 'Life is lived forward but understood backwards' — but the point may be that he's not writing an autobiography at all. His books are, rather, acute, funny studies of different institutions — the British jazz scene (and provincial hedonism), the Navy (and homosexuality) and now the middle-class family. Melly is a wonderful participant observer, but gives little of himself away; he passes through other people's scenes as an enthusiastic innocent; *his* feelings are rarely our concern.

Still, a family is not the same sort of institution as a ship or jazz band and *Scouse Mouse* has a more complex, reflective tone than its predecessors. They were, in many ways, the performance of a brilliant talk show guest: Melly's life emerged from them in a series of funny incidents, unforgettable characters, intimate glimpses of the famous. But, while his approach is formally similar in *Scouse Mouse*, its memorable events and people are selected by a different logic — the vagaries of childish perception, the quirks of a family's private myths and routines, the banality of growing up, the accidents of kinship and place.

The 'ordinariness' of Melly's childhood makes *Scouse Mouse* a delight. Later in life he may have fallen in inevitably with braggarts, wits and madmen but his family was mostly straight-forwardly, decently, middle class. There were monsters around — W.W. Twyne, for example, the head of his prep school. But Twyne seems so conventionally unpleasant — have there ever been prep school proprietors who weren't odd? — that he becomes a comic-book character; Melly almost remembers him with affection. And, anyway, his childhood was obviously focused on his family: his father, self-effacing, quietly deflating pretension, deliberately lazy; his mother, stage-struck, ambitious, painfully anxious to please. The supporting cast of kin were Jewish on his mother's side, northern burghers on his father's. They shared a belief in the security and rightness of their social status.

Melly builds up his illuminating account of 1930s provincial middle-class culture with the same concern for visual detail that he brought to pop culture as a critic in the 1960s. He comments:

> it would be absurd not to admit to the obsessive spirit in my remembering so minutely the contents and decoration of an unremarkable terrace house some fifty years ago, but I have always tended to understand people initially through the objects they accumulate and the manner in which they display or conceal them.

Scouse mouse in person: the young George Melly

This is (typically) to underplay Melly's sociological skill — his individual details are a cultural argument (take, for example, his deadpan account of how his mother 'modernised' the Victorian house to which the family moved in 1935 — she put in all the things that her equivalent householder two generations on would take out).

I was born 20 years after Melly and grew up in the professional rather than commercial middle class, but his descriptions of family furnishings, gestures and rituals had an inescapable resonance anyway, and, in accounting for himself as a stereotypical 'little boy', Melly makes clear the ways in which low culture — the cinema and radio, advertisements and comic books — were beginning to slice into the certainties, reach behind the solidarity, of the bourgeois family. This process would accelerate in the 1950s, and if it's impossible to read any account of a happy childhood without feeling nostalgic, the point of *Scouse Mouse* is not that things were better then (even for the middle classes) but that in this still secure cultural setting, tolerance (for homosexuality or the avant-garde, for example) was the other side of snobbery. George Melly is, all his books suggest, a nice person. *Scouse Mouse* shows why. □

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POLAND
Gary Mead

Publish and be persecuted

POLAND'S RULERS speak in military metaphors when they describe social issues — usually a 'campaign' or 'offensive' is about to be conducted against some rampant social problem, be it alcoholism or work absenteeism. The latest target for an offensive is the published word. On 8 March Marek Nowakowski, one of Poland's leading short-story writers, was arrested in Warsaw and charged with 'co-operation with Western organisations engaged in activities detrimental to the interests of the Polish state'. His 'crime' in this instance is the publication of a volume of short stories in Britain and other Western countries*. These stories are vignettes of ordinary existence following the imposition of martial law, in December 1981. Some of them are beautifully rendered illustrations of visceral reactions to military rule, and all of them highlight the contradictions within Poland today. Nowakowski's stories have been regularly printed — under his own name — in *Tygodnik Mazowsze*, the leading underground bulletin of proscribed Solidarity.

Nowakowski's arrest is the most visible element in a general ideological campaign now being waged on Poland's creative writers. The communist leadership has long detested the majority of these writers. One of the bitterest truths the regime has to swallow is the fact that it has not only the working class and peasantry ranged against it but also the bulk of the country's artists, with the writers leading the way.

The first shot in the latest round of this struggle was fired in late February this year. The Cultural Department of the Central Committee of the PZPR (the Communist Party) issued a report calling for greater restrictions on the publication of Western authors, and on Polish writers disloyal to the regime. It attacked Polish publishers (all state-controlled, apart from the few unofficial and thus illegal publishers) for their 'evil spell of fascination with alleged outstanding values of the writings of the political opposition'. In what is clearly a return to Stalinist criteria, the report urged that 'stricter ideological and artistic criteria be applied as regards translations from the literature of capitalist countries'.

This report was drawn up by Kazimierz Molek, and is intended to bring Poland's

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publishing houses back into line. Molek chose to single out for especial criticism the publication of Poland's 1980 Literature Nobel prizewinner, Czeslaw Milosz. Interestingly enough, Molek was only side-swiping the writers — he reserved his main attack for state publishers, who are guilty he said of 'generously and frequently issuing new impressions' of the work of authors disliked by the regime. Most worrying for Molek was the fact that the 1984 publishing plan shows that 146 US, French and British titles are to be published (total books — 8,234 million), whereas only 128 translations from 'socialist' countries are scheduled (total books — 3,199 million). The presumption of the regime is that this reflects a conspiracy among the state-controlled publishing houses to further capitalist ideology through literature; as simple-minded a reading as could be hoped for. In fact, it indicates the popularity of Western over Soviet literature, a trend in every aspect of culture, from punk to Pinter.

In the strenuous search for some means of capturing the hearts and minds of disaffected Polish youth — Poland having an average age of 28 — the authorities are leaving no page unread. One of the most subversive subjects that students opt for in Polish universities today is English. For them, it has the status accorded to sociology in British universities of the Sixties: a subject that inevitably encourages them to think critically (i.e. outside establishment preconceptions). We may all have been wrong about sociology, but for the Polish authorities, considerably better-trained to sniff out radicalism, Western literature and literature produced by non-regime Poles is now an ideological enemy. This attitude has its justification in Leninist antecedents, a familiar catch-phrase of Jaruzelski's government being its 'determination to return to Leninist norms of social life'. Lenin considered the press and publishing generally to be no less dangerous than machine-guns and bombs. Marek Nowakowski is now facing a one-ten-year jail sentence for doing no more than writing fiction. A dangerous man indeed.

On the other hand, there is an acceptable face to Polish publishing at present, most notably represented by the turgid prose of Deputy Premier Mieczyslaw Rakowski. His latest book (anyone writing so prolifically must have wonderful secretaries to shoulder the burden of government) is called *Trudny Dialog* (Difficult Dialogue) and is a collection of his speeches and interviews between 1981 and 1983. Rakowski likes to pose as the thinking person's reluctant autocrat, with emphasis on autocrat. He recently made a speech in which he talked of the need to demand from all teachers the education of young people 'in a spirit of realism, to make them aware of how complicated the world is'. But there are complications and complications, and one of them that sticks out a mile is how to reconcile young Poles' taste for 'decadent' capitalist literature with the political demands of a regime obsessed with controlling every aspect of civilian life. The difficulty of Rakowski's dialogue is not only his literary incompetence, but that it is actually a monologue.

**The Canary and other stories* by Marek Nowakowski, published by Harvill Press.

PROSE
Michael Hofmann

Four square

The Collected Prose
ELIZABETH BISHOP *Chatto* £12.95

If Molière is right, and everything that isn't verse is prose, and everything that isn't prose is verse, then, with *The Collected Prose* of Elizabeth Bishop (companion-volume to *The Complete Poems,* out last year, from the same publisher), we shall have seen all we shall ever get to see of this wonderful author's work. The two books, in their peach and chlorine jackets, with water-colours by Bishop on the covers, look well together, and they are well matched in size, both coming in at just under 300 pages. If the excellence of the *Prose* is quite unsurprising, then it should only be observed that it is not a separate excellence from that of the poems.

The virtues of the prose are the virtues of the poems: observation, wit, decorum, a sinuous intelligence and above all what Randall Jarrell called her 'moral attractiveness' — no abuse, no indiscretion, no protests. If this sounds prim, it isn't: it's only an indication of how far things have gone the other way. Here is Jarrell again:

> It is odd how pleasant and sympathetic her poems are, in these days when many a poet had rather walk down children like Mr Hyde than weep over them like Swinburne, and when many a poem is gruesome occupational therapy for a poet who stays legally innocuous by means of it.

The prose is odd and pleasant and sympathetic in much the same way. The subjects are largely those familiar from the poems: her family, her native Nova Scotia, life by the shores of the Atlantic, in Massachusetts and Brazil, paintings, human portraits and 'questions of travel'. The *aller-et-retour* form of many of the poems is discernible in some of the prose, in 'To the Botequim and Back' and 'A Trip to Vigia'. Sometimes, there are detailed correspondences between the poems and the prose: it is the same scene from childhood in 'The Country Mouse' and 'In the Waiting Room'. Or correspondences of genre: the realistically elaborated story 'The Sea and its Shore' is charmed from its hypothetical premise in just the same way as 'The Man-Moth' from its newspaper misprint. Both are abstract fantasies indebted, it seems to me, to Kafka. Or again, one might identify two distinct styles in Bishop, in her prose as in her poems: a loose, probing, 'spoken' style and a stately 'high style', literary, fixed, almost artificial, hinting at Victorian prose and at Defoe. These similarities and others make the division of Bishop's prose into the two categories 'Memory' and 'Stories' rather factitious: after all, no such division is made among her poems.

If one imagined a square with admiration and sympathy, amusement and dignity as its four corners, the whole of Elizabeth Bishop's work would be situated inside it. Take for instance the account of only her second meeting with

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Marianne Moore, an outing to the circus at Madison Square Garden. Miss Moore was carrying

> two huge brown paper bags, full of something. I was given one of these. They contained, she told me, stale brown bread for the elephants, because stale brown bread was one of the things they liked best to eat. (I later suspected that they might like stale white bread just as much but that Marianne had been thinking of their health.)

In a way, the scene is 'a gift', just as the remarkable Miss Moore and her mother are 'a gift', but how easy it would have been to collapse it into sentimental farce. Instead, all the parties involved, and not least the elephants, whose wishes are solicitously though never intrusively guessed at, are treated with the utmost respect — a smiling respect, though, not stiffness or stuffiness. Elizabeth Bishop marries generosity of spirit with generosity of style ('one of the things', 'just as much'): how well her memoir earns its title — itself an acknowledged and admired borrowing from Miss Moore — 'Efforts of Affection'.

It is this kind of tact and attention — one should perhaps call it grace — that is maintained throughout this collection, and makes it so delightful and rewarding. Whenever it really matters to her, Elizabeth Bishop has the ability to procure for herself the reader's utter, unreserved belief, most obviously when she is writing, as a child, about her childhood. This, just as fraught with difficulties as the type of scene with Miss Moore, is managed with equal assurance. It is, I think, because Bishop is always so committed to the moment and the scene she is describing, and free from any ulterior purpose, that she is both so engaging and so trustworthy. Her naturalness, self-possession and fun *are* those of a child: 'My grandmother settled herself on a log to talk to her friends, and I went wading in the river with mine.'

There is so much more I would like to say about her: her ingenuity, her freakishness, her tendency to personify objects and places (another sign of generosity, for she doesn't do the opposite and reify people in the way, say, Dickens does), the wonderfully candid way she allows herself to be scrutinised and laughed at, just as she, in her writing, laughs and scrutinises. The freedom of her manner: 'he gave me his name and asked me to print it; here it is: Manoel Benicio de Loyola, "diamond-hunter of Curralinho".' The way virtue and virtuosity seem to be inextricably bound up in her work: Miss Mamie in 'Mercedes Hospital' who 'has the local reputation of a saint'; the naive painter Gregorio Valdes whom she encourages; the blue-and-white bandstand in the plaza which is hideous, 'but because it was so small it didn't spoil the effect at all'; the shy poet Ruy (and his even shyer son) who knows no English and admires T.S. Eliot, whom everyone knows, and for whom Bishop and her friend are unable to do anything, not even to buy him a cup of coffee; the grey-green mildew in the rainy season in Rio which will, Bishop knows, sooner or later attack the portrait of her 'Uncle Neddy' but which she still loves. I have helplessly and purposely left out of my account all mention of Elizabeth Bishop's masterpiece 'In the Village' that concludes this book, which, even without it, would be wholly admirable. If only there were another to come. □

FICTION—1
Sara Maitland

Criminal intent

Here Today
ZOË FAIRBAIRNS *Methuen* £7.95

Zoë Fairbairns's new novel is a 'whodunit' — although, of course, as the blurb hastens to reassure us, not a 'simple' whodunit, but one which 'asks a whole range of questions facing women in the 1980s'. It certainly asks some pretty direct questions of feminist literary theory: not ethical questions, but structural ones.

The genre nature of Fairbairns's novel will not surprise anyone who knows her work — her cover blurb also reminds us that she has previously 'brought feminist insights to other traditionally popular forms of the novel'. Her last book, *Stand We at Last* (Virago), was an Epic Family Saga, spanning five generations. There is an argument that goes as follows: Since these are the books that women read, should not feminists use them to infiltrate mass consciousness? Angela Philips, a feminist journalist, has put it this way: 'Some feminists see this "normalising" of radical thought as a threat. Such purism is not for me. I do not care in the least whether a woman discovers that a hankering for independence is normal through the pages of *Woman's Own* or *Spare Rib*.'

If legitimating a 'hankering for independence' were the whole of feminism, she would be right. But isn't there something about transforming consciousness, and changing the world, somewhere in the deal?

Ten years ago there was a common, though not very precise conviction in the Women's Movement that, when feminists were able to get their fiction published, an essentially feminist (and therefore, we were sure, both delightful and radical) form would naturally emerge. Well, it has not happened. On the contrary. As Angela McRobbie pointed out (*NS* 16 March), most feminist novels, whatever their radical political claims, end up showing mainly 'how difficult it is to escape the stranglehold of form. It standardises and controls content; it makes [these novels] into soap'. Some have tried to blame the nature of the novel itself for this, but there are Third World and black writers who have manipulated and controlled the novel so as not only to criticise the society that created it, but also to enable changes in consciousness — and not *just* the South American fantasts, but writers like Bessie Head and Alice Walker, too.

Perhaps we never really took the question of structure seriously enough; we failed to believe our own rhetoric, which taught us that nothing is going to come about 'naturally' — and that includes feminist fiction and radical form. As Angela Carter, one of the few who have taken this properly to heart, has pointed out: 'One important function of bourgeois fiction is to teach people how to behave in social circles to which they think they might be able to aspire... a lot of the fiction that has come directly from the Women's Movement performs, however unconsciously, the same function.' We have introduced new content and new mores to the novel, but we have not evolved many transformatory structures.

And here Fairbairns is refreshing: in embracing the genre novel, she is splendidly self-conscious; and, from self-consciousness, comes irony. She is never going to write soap by mistake. Instead, she forces such questions as: 'How far can we manipulate these popular genres?' This is rather tough on her; each time she publishes a novel, the occasion is used to raise questions about feminist forms and genres. Her real breakthrough will be when her whodunits are reviewed in the 'Crime Ration' section, when literary editors don't send them to women like me, who seldom read thrillers and don't know much about reviewing them. (For instance, how do you tell the consumer anything useful about them without giving the game away?)

In the meantime, it is worth saying that Fairbairns is not passive within her chosen genre; she does *play* with it. Just by adopting it, she presents sexual harassment at work (an offence usually dismissed or laughed at) as a serious crime — because, after all, all thrillers are about serious and violent crime. Her 'detective' works collectively, by force of circumstance and within convincing social and personal limitations; her victim refuses to be so cast; her criminal is totally ignored — given neither glamour nor psychological excuses.

What gets in the way of Fairbairns writing a truly rattlin' good yarn is, I suspect, the same thing as got her into the idea in the first place — her own complex and humorous irony. Nothing is allowed to be assumed: not goodies, not baddies, not whodunits, not, finally, even the axiomatic truths of feminism. In *Here Today* she has a character who suffers from 'a trained and inquiring mind' which 'got her into trouble'. Even her friends, who 'understood her academic spirit', ultimately 'made it clear that playing devil's advocate was a piece of

Medbh McGuckian

A dream of rain

The motorways of satellites collect the sun,
The mirrors of windmills, waves dream
Of being calmed, the water-hyacinths
Swarm and rot into flame.

Still the insects pepper the air,
Sperm releases its rain,
The joints of the traffic stabilize
In wet weather.

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decadence which could not be afforded and might deservedly be misunderstood'. I find myself, with considerable reluctance, on the friends' side; not on Catherine's, which is also Fairbairns's. The whodunit is intrinsically a conservative and academic genre, and that outweighs even the best (and *Here Today* will be among the best) attempts to challenge and subvert it. In the long run, I *don't* think we can 'afford it'.

Nonetheless, I'd far rather, while waiting for a really creative radical feminist novel, read *Here Today* (because it is witty, provocative, ironic and, above all, lots of fun) than plough through what Carter calls the 'fictionalised etiquette lessons', or the unaware, unselfconscious pulp-romances (heroine in search of individual fulfilment and true love, however construed) which seem to be the alternative at the moment. □

FICTION—2
Harriett Gilbert

Truth games

Pattern for a Tapestry
AUTRAN DOURADO *Peter Owen* £8.95
Difficult Loves
ITALO CALVINO *Secker* £8.50
Concrete
THOMAS BERNHARD *Dent* £8.95
Scorched Earth
EDWARD FENTON *Sinclair Browne* £7.95

> . . .all these family stories. The events he had been involved in, those he had only witnessed, those he had heard told. Those he had invented himself and no longer knew if they had happened or not. . .

Such are the rich, thick, nubbly threads of Autran Dourado's **Pattern for a Tapestry,** published in Brazil in 1970 and now translated, by John M. Parker, with all the appreciation and skill that the novel's ingenuity deserves.

The 'he' referred to is Joao da Fonseca Nogueira, a man attempting to extract his boyhood from the past, to rescue the Sao Mateus boarding school; the small town to which he returned each vacation; his parents; his uncles; his aunt Marguarida; the whorehouse to which he delivered some shoes with Zito, his smart older friend. Also to be saved is the family folklore — which, as such things tend to be, is crusted with gothic suicides, secret passions and madness.

There is also the wider legend of Xambá the bandit, a man who vanished from Joao's home town leaving only a 'luminous trail of crimes, barbarities and acts of vengeance. Which we gradually forgot in the mists and quagmires of memories, of hearsay, of whispers'. While Joao is concerned with reversing such forgetting, his author is busy demonstrating — with dexterous sleights of imagery and phrase — that forgetfulness is just an ingredient of memory; that, if we are to recapture the past, it must either fit or be *made* to fit into a pattern. Each of the first six sections of his novel is an apparently disconnected, arbitrary act of remembrance — yet, in each, he has sewn some half-hidden stitches, all of which can later be tugged to the surface. Then, whatever colour emerges (unease at the mention of Uncle Zózimo; the warm smell of Milk of Roses in a prostitute's armpits) vibrates both backward and forward through the book, exposing the design of personal obsessions that Joao has created from his past.

The final section, in which the town's bandit is remembered by a series of witnesses, makes obvious Joao's fallibility. It is here, however, that Dourado plays his last trick: revealing with subtlety, humour and affection how memory's betrayal of past events is also its act of homage.

In a country which rarely bothers to translate other peoples' literature (despite the apparent evidence of this week's fiction review), Italo Calvino is exceptional — his British publications having become an almost biannual event. The stories collected in **Difficult Loves** have been dug from the 1950s, and it has to be said that the two longer tales, 'Smog' and 'A Plunge into Real Estate', give the impression of having been printed as ballast. Bad, they certainly are not; neither, however, is as startling, as magically strange and inventive, as Calvino's more recent work. Their greatest value lies, perhaps, in the picture they sketch of an Italy dazedly trying to pull itself together in the wake of the Second World War.

The shorter tales — to which, in fact, the title *Difficult Loves* refers — are a better reason for the book's publication. A *Decameron*-type package of stories ('The Adventure of a Soldier', 'The Adventure of a Poet', 'The Adventure of a Near-Sighted Man', etc.), they are, superficially, all concerned with more-or-less tortuous sexual, romantic or simply affectionate encounters. A man of obsessively meticulous habits confronts the hazards of an overnight train to visit his lover in Rome; a woman, swimming, discovers that she has somehow lost her bathing-suit and is forced to tread water in growing despair until rescued by a passing fisherman. But what the stories are really about (of course, this being Calvino) is the difficulty not of love itself, but of verbalising, of making *sense* of the chaos of emotional experience. Delicate, funny, compassionate and wise, these tales are the obvious seedlings of later Calvino flowers.

Thomas Bernhard's **Concrete** is only half satisfactory. It has, apparently, been proclaimed a 'despairing indictment of our society' — yet the one-dimensional, anti-intellectual, anti-artistic, 'concrete' world against which the novel rails is nothing but a worn-out cliché, with little resemblance to 'our' or to anyone's society. The attack, being aimed at a delusion, can only fall flat on its face.

As a study of *personal* sterility, however, the book does have the neurotic integrity to drag the reader along (a process assisted by the fact that it has neither paragraphs not chapter breaks). For ten years, the narrator, Rudolf, has been researching the life of Mendelssohn Bartholdy. That he hasn't yet started to *write* the life, he blames on either his ill health (a condition that the reader must doubt) or the claimed interference of his sister. Set entirely in Rudolf's unreliable head — as he tries to talk himself into the work we can see he will never begin — the book is a deft illustration of one kind of madness. Where it fails is in its attempt to create, from this, a metaphor for modern life.

Edward Fenton's **Scorched Earth**, winner of this year's Sinclair Prize for 'an unpublished novel of social or political significance' is, despite the anger in its title, a rambling, eminently genial account of urban life as improvised by some of today's young unemployed. The novel is funny, sometimes touching, but its main fascination (should you, like me, be several years older than 30) is of the anthropological, 'so *that's* how they see things' variety. Which is a shame, because there are hints of something darker and stronger: an almost puritanical rage against those who have left these kids the mess, and a kind of desperate, exciting, almost possible political inventiveness.

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TELEVISION
Jim McGuigan

Unhappy medium

Powerplays: Trevor Griffiths in Television
MIKE POOLE & JOHN WYVER *British Film Institute* £12 & £5.95

Just when 'serious' TV drama-writing reaches an apparently terminal crisis it becomes the object of sustained critical attention, as exemplified by this book on Trevor Griffiths. Symptomatic of the crisis is the virtual eclipse of the BBC's *Play for Today* which once occupied the space for progressive writing *and* directing that was bequeathed by its illustrious predecessor *The Wednesday Play* and before that ABC's *Armchair Theatre*. This crisis of traditional TV drama relates to a broad sea-change in the institution of TV: public service broadcasting's economic insecurity, struggles around Channel Four, and widespread introduction of cable into Britain on strictly commercial terms. 'Culture' in the old Reithian sense is on the way out—which is not entirely a bad thing except for the fact that it did provide some cosy niches for discomforting work. Perhaps, then, this is the time to take stock; to review and even celebrate what was achieved during the much less harsh conditions of the 1960s and '70s.

There are few better places to begin taking stock than with Griffiths who has written brilliantly for popular forms of TV drama as well as for the prestige slots. In the early Seventies, Griffiths established a reputation for dialectically sophisticated political plays: in the theatre with *Occupations*, on Gramsci and workers' control, and *The Party*, on post-'68 prospects for revolution; and, on TV, with *All Good Men*, on reform and revolution. He then wrote the 11-part TV series/serial *Bill Brand*, an intricate exploration of Labour Party politics that was transmitted by ITV in 1976. This and other work, including the TV adaptation of his stage play *Comedians* in 1979, put Griffiths securely in the pantheon of outstanding TV dramatists with, most notably, the late David Mercer and Dennis Potter.

It is interesting that the construction of a 'great tradition' of TV drama has not developed very far as yet. To my knowledge, there are no book-length studies of either Mercer or Potter. I would not be surprised, though, to learn of industrious *American* Ph.D. students labouring away right now to fill the critical gap. There are, of course, other means of making revaluations.

The BFI dubs this the 'Year of Television' and throughout the month of March the National Film Theatre has been screening most of Griffiths's TV output. Mike Poole and John Wyver's book was rushed out to coincide with that event. *Powerplays* is both a very important book and a rather disappointing one. It aims to be comprehensive yet it betrays signs of hasty writing and the evasion of difficult issues.

As journalists, Poole and Wyver have done much to raise the intellectual level of TV criticism/previewing/reviewing in *City Limits* and other magazines. They stress the specificity of TV as *medium* against the usual treatment of it as a more or less transparent window. Poole is on the editorial board of the theoretical journal *Screen*. In the current issue he discusses the history of TV criticism, challenges its promotional and literary dilettantist forms, and argues forcefully that 'what is ultimately at stake is not so much the kind of criticism television should get as the kind of *television* criticism should demand'. The book about Griffiths is an intervention on this terrain.

Poole and Wyver write exceptionally well on the Griffiths text, which is most evident in their painstaking unravelling of the Balzacian complexities of *Bill Brand* and the Chinese complexities of the shift in meanings between Griffiths's original *Comrades* script for the Hollywood film *Reds* to what they consider to be the dreadful final result. But they are trapped by Griffiths himself: the author's accounts of his own work and struggles to overcome the 'constraints' of oppressive TV structures are often simply replicated, particularly in the early chapters.

In spite of this, Poole and Wyver claim that they want to 'problematise the notion of authorship' by situating Griffiths's work within the 'three histories' of social biography, TV institution and British politics. Nowhere in the book is this successfully achieved and, as it progresses, 'history' becomes an excuse rather than a method of analysis. Several signs of strain are discernible. I shall concentrate on just two: their accounts of what Griffiths was trying to do in the mid-Seventies and of the fate of his work since.

Like many of Griffiths's critics, Poole and Wyver are bothered by his preference for naturalism/realism. However, they seemingly endorse his justification for the style of *Bill Brand*: 'I have to work with the popular imagination which has been shaped by naturalism.' Griffiths's theatre-writing has, however, always had elements of non-naturalism. But Poole and Wyver suggest that the middle act of *Comedians* — when the *theatre* audience becomes the club audience for the comic routines — was a *chronological* break from the naturalistic strategy of *Bill Brand*. This is just wrong since the première of *Comedians* at Nottingham Playhouse was a *year* before the making of the TV series. Although they actually note that fact, Poole and Wyver's thesis demands that the downturn in class politics in the mid-Seventies necessitated a switch to non-naturalistic devices in Griffiths's work. This is historical explanation at its most schematic.

More troubling still is how Poole and Wyver deal with what they see as Griffiths's subsequent decline: the retreat from contemporary politics to historical adaptation such as his scripting of the BBC's overdressed *Sons and Lovers*. Apparently, this is associated with the downturn in progressive TV homologous with the drift to the Right in society. The thesis is qualified by reference to two partial exceptions: the minor work *Oi For England* and the ambitious project of *Tory Stories* from which came the 1981 *Play for Today* on the ruling class's response to the 1945 General Election, *Country*.

In 1979 *Tory Stories* was planned as six sequential *Plays for Today* that would trace class domination and the phoenix-like qualities of Conservatism from the war to the present through the fictionalised lives of the Carlion brewing dynasty. Only one script was finished, *The Gang's All Here*, which became the basis for *Country*. Why the others did not materialise remains an unwritten mystery. Quite inadequate is Poole and Wyver's limp observation: 'In some fundamental way, and not at all because of censorship, such scripts *could not* be written in the repressive social and political climate of Britain at the start of the '80s.'

Deterministic fatalism does not explain a sadly lost opportunity to intervene powerfully within TV drama against regenerate Conservatism during Thatcher's first term of office. But, as one of Griffiths's own characters insists, 'A life's a long thing. A book can't hold it all' — nor can a review.

William Scammell

Finsbury Park

In the mouth of a Scots girl 'polymorphous perversity'
takes on the disinterestedness of chamber music.
She sits in the kitchen telling me about Freud.
It's late. The answering machine is connected up,

Cunning Stunts posters brighten a pillar, couscous
lies in wait for breakfast. There are skips all over
Finsbury Park, swingboats fallen to earth. She will put back
the sky of tumbled ceilings. I go to bed with Thomas Mann

on music: 'Her strictness of form must stand as an excuse
for the ravishments of her actual sounds.' Basta.
There's something I've always liked about big girls,
their granite jeans, the long slope of unfussy minds.

Contracted to friendship, we have declined
to colonise love's empire. Our forte's thought
whose gender is marmoreal sleep, the god of pulses
running up his storm cones in the dark.

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RHETORIC
Bernard Crick

My good people

A Radical Reader: The Struggle for Change in England 1381-1914
ed. CHRISTOPHER HAMPTON *Penguin* £7.95

Of course they had to put off until 2050, even in far-off 1984, the final translation of English literature into Newspeak. This was because the translation of writers like 'Shakespeare, Milton, Swift, Byron and Dickens' was proving 'slow and difficult' (i.e. impossible). In the end, language is indestructible: the vernacular will defeat the technicians and the academicians.

Each of these men is well represented here — there's always been as much ideological body-snatching over great William as now over poor George. Christopher Hampton (Hampton the poet, the author of *Socialism in a Crippled World*, not Hampton the playwright) is deeply steeped in the polemical rhetoric he so lovingly and powerfully anthologises. 'The basic freedoms that so many English men and women now accept, both in fact and in law, as their birthright,' he begins, 'are of course neither so firmly established nor so proof against attack that we can afford to take them for granted or believe that they are to be maintained, let alone extended, without constant vigilance and constant effort.' Lincoln put it more briefly, albeit he was plagiarising a Lord Mayor of Dublin. Most radicals run to wind, indeed the stuff and matter of this book is most marvellous to read aloud and loudly: much polemical prose came from the lungs of, if not always preachers, at least men and women used to the pulpit — it has the range and cadence of the church organ, not the muted casual staccato of modern broadcast argument. Certainly Mr Hampton favours the powerful more than the precise. He ends his brief Epilogue:

> It is a struggle which is still going on, and has yet to be won, directed towards the making of a world in which economic inequality, social deprivation and injustice will have been replaced by a system which embodies the communal responsibilities and rights of men and women working without fear, in equality of comradeship, for common ends and the fulfilment of their highest needs.

'The struggle' is, ideally, that of the common people, but others must also be included. When Tocqueville and Beaumont were travelling in America, among the 45 toasts at a Democratic Club dinner in Albany was one to 'Percy Bysshe Shelley, who though by birth an aristocrat, by sensibility and reason a Friend of the People!' So Christopher Hampton also pays tribute to Honorary Commoners: 'those among the English writers and intellectuals . . . who, at crucial periods in the history of England, have taken an active part in the struggle, speaking for the people and sometimes [sic] even [sic] with them. Men like Wycliffe, Thomas More, Shakespeare, Milton, Swift, Blake, Wordsworth, Byron, Shelley and Dickens.' And as regards More, Shakespeare and Swift, even sometimes not. But one warms to the editor's enthusiasm and refusal, no Pharisee he, to limit his team selection to card-carrying radicals. As with the Yorkshire Cricket Club, anything can happen — so long as it is cricket, or rather rhetoric for or about the common people.

The collection is marvellously powerful and eclectic — all the way from John Ball's immortal, 'My good people, things cannot go well in England, nor ever shall, till everything be made common, and there are neither villeins nor gentlemen', to Mary Webb's poem 'Autumn 1914':

> He's gone, her man, so good with his hands
> In the harvest-field and the lambing shed.
> Straight ran his share in the deep ploughlands —
> And now he marches among the dead . . .
>
> His son comes in like a ghost through the door.
> He'll be ready, maybe, for the next big war.

I'm never sure why evocation of the dead of the trenches of the First World War can make me weep, whereas recall of the dead of the camps of the Second World War creates a dry rage. Between these two quotations, there is the best anthology of this kind to appear in our generation. The poet, for instance, restores the prose introduction to the well-known poem, so mistakenly sung by pleated rows of ladies in blue hats, surely the greatest revolutionary hymn ever penned, Blake's 'Jerusalem'.

A pity, however, that Christopher Hampton plainly believes that what he offers is history. And only English history, if history at all — Hampton's perspective is not even fully insular: apart from bodysnatching Burns, his vision is fixed south of the Wall and east of Offa's Dyke. Rhetoric and polemic are not history, they are the froth of history, not the stuff; at best they are exhortations to *present* action, only a very partial record of the past. 'Therefore we dare not despair, but will look for, wait for and hope for deliverance still,' he quotes Bunyan. He actually presents a 20-page chronology of historical events as if for readers who know nothing at all of history, and offers a thumping big bibliography of odds and ends of secondary history as well as documentary sources.

Among the sources, it is a pity not to find the old Left Book Club's *Poems of Freedom*, edited by John Mulgan — the New Zealand novelist — with the fascinatingly equivocal introduction by W.H. Auden; nor George Orwell and Reginald Reynolds's *British Pamphleteers*; nor the volumes in Lord Bullock's fine old British Political Tradition series, especially those on the American and on the French Revolutions, which were full of radical matter. Were these not radical enough? Restoring a balance is not truth. Radical history is no more true history than Tory or Whig history. And the early radicals deal in myth, not even in ideology. But that's no matter. The pretension to be historical is almost typical of the strident, rhythmic voice of protest. 'Oppression driveth a wise man mad' — not quite, but makes many see red and not much else. Every generation produces one such famous and popular anthology of the prose and poetry of political protest (alliteration is catching); this is it for ours. And 600 pages in a large, readable format is good value for money. □

Germaine Greer

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David Lodge

SMALL WORLD

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Janice Elliott, *Sunday Telegraph*

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India's Simmering Revolution: The Naxalite Uprising

SUMANTA BANERJEE
Zed Press £19.95 & £7.95

What is ailing India? Its food production has been rising over the past five years. But so too has been the percentage of people living below the (officially defined) poverty line. India is among the world's top ten industrialised countries. Yet most of its basic and intermediate industries are running below capacity due to lack of demand.

Maldistribution is the name of India's ailment. National food supplies are adequate. But wages (in cash or kind) are so uneven that half of the 700 million Indians have to make do with insufficient food. What is more, maldistribution is getting worse.

How much longer can this process go on before something gives? Or is the Indian peasantry, the bulk of the nation, so fatalistic that it would be idle to expect it to rise up? Although not as revolutionary as Chinese or Vietnamese peasants, Indians have been far from docile. Modern Indian history offers many instances of peasant revolts.

In the early years of independence India, revolutionary peasants in the Telangana region in the south set up a soviet that covered four million people and lasted four years. More recently, during 1969-72, landless and poor peasants, led by the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist), established small liberated zones in eight of India's 22 states.

Although none of these zones survived for long, the experience has left a lasting impression on the peasantry of the areas. The term Naxalite lives on, suggesting a radical alternative to the present political system. It is a derivative of Naxalbari — a place in Darjeeling district of West Bengal — where armed landless peasants seized land in 1967.

India's Simmering Revolution is an intelligent and objective account of this turbulent chapter of Indian history. It is written by an Indian journalist who, being a Marxist, understands and appreciates the dynamic of the revolutionary movement. At the same time he does not allow his Marxist-Leninist convictions to dull his critical faculties when it comes to analysing the weakness and failures of the movement and its leader, Charu Mazumdar.

Sumanta Banerjee's book therefore comes through as a fine example of critical appreciation of the Naxalite uprisings. It should be compulsory reading for all those interested in revolutionary movements in the Third World.

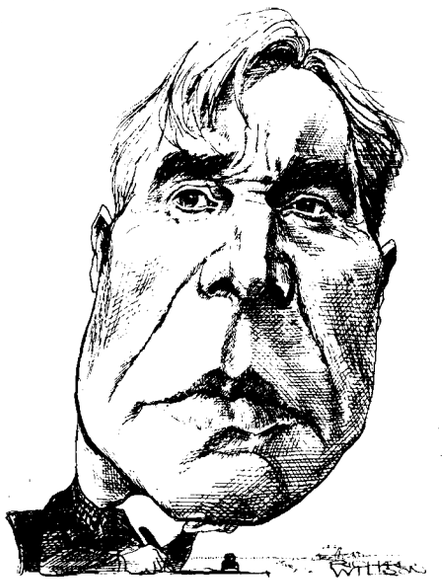
Dilip Hiro

I Remember

BORIS PASTERNAK *Harvard* £4.20

Boris Pasternak completed his autobiographical sketch in 1956 and planned to publish it as a preface to a collection of poems before the controversy over *Doctor Zhivago* (1957) persuaded him to abandon this idea. The present edition, comprising David Magarshack's translation of *I Remember* as well as Manya Harari's translation of Pasternak's article on Shakespeare, was first published in 1959. Although David Magarshack calls the work 'the most outspoken and heart-searching document a great poet has ever written', Pasternak himself modestly describes it as 'an impression of how life in my own case was transmuted into art'.

Imaginatively reworking material first presented in *A Safe-Conduct* (1931), Pasternak shows how he absorbed the cultural climate of Russia from an early age. In his case it was unavoidable: his father was a painter and professor, his mother was a pianist. When Pasternak was four, in 1894, Tolstoy turned up at his house to hear some music. This led to an unforgettable experience as the infant Pasternak woke up in some anguish and was taken to see the visitors. Immediately the inspirational presence of Tolstoy overwhelmed him, thus 'that night stood like a landmark between the unconscious state of infancy and my subsequent childhood'.



Other influences on Pasternak were Scriabin ('I loved him to distraction'), Rilke ('he knew my father and corresponded with him') and Mayakovsky. Although Pasternak admits he was 'never on intimate terms' with Mayakovsky he feels competent to offer an observation on the suicide of his great contemporary: 'It seems to me that Mayakovsky shot himself out of pride because he had condemned something in himself or around himself with which his self-respect could not be reconciled.' It is hardly surprising that Pasternak is fascinated by the subject of suicide since it is a phenomenon familiar to Russian poets. Esenin hanged himself, as Pasternak recalls, as did Marina Tsvetayeva (1892-1941).

In his penultimate chapter, 'Three Shadows', Pasternak describes his friendship with Tsvetayeva. At first indifferent to her poetry, he was astonished by the lyrical power of her book *Versts* when he read it in 1922. An epistolary passion followed which led Pasternak to the conclusion that 'Marina Tsvetayeva was a woman with the soul of an active man, determined, militant, indomitable.' When she returned to Russia in 1939 her husband and daughter were arrested while she was banished to the provinces where, tragically, she succumbed to despair and took her own life.

Abruptly breaking off his memoir, after a discussion of the Georgian poets Paolo Yashvili and Titian Tabidze, Pasternak admits it would be difficult to describe his recent life 'within the framework of the Revolution'. As it stands his essay alternates between anecdotes and philosophical asides of a melancholy nature: 'In life it is more necessary to lose than gain.' It is a soulful confession of the aspirations of an artist given great significance by the quality of art that Pasternak produced.

Alan Bold

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The Youngest Science

LEWIS THOMAS *Oxford* £12.50

Lewis Thomas is the doyen of American doctors. He has been in on modern scientific medicine — born in the Twenties under the aegis of Minot and Murphy, and Banting and Best — more or less since its inception. He accepts that the mechanisation of medicine is here to stay, and that it works, and that there is no going back. He has been Dean of two medical schools and eminent in five specialities.

His well and wittily written random notes are always pertinent and sometimes startling. He runs the gamut from the ability of tracking-dogs to identify those immunological markers which signify selfness ('man's best friend sniffs out histo-compatible donor') to speculations that the earth's body resembles an enormous embryo still in the process of developing. He criticises computers on the grounds that they are infallible ('I have been inputting data into my brain all my life, some of it thruputting and out-putting from the other ear'). He advances the claims of women, with their genetically-linked concern for the well-being of the species, to become our governors. He tackles subjects as diverse as the difficulties in dismantling established bureaucracies and the theory that disease represents the *normal* function of the body's mechanism for protecting itself, and much more besides.

Perhaps too much, because, despite all the excellence of its parts, the whole is, judged by the highest standards, disappointing. Sponsored by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, it has not only the virtues but the vices of subsidised literature. It has no coherent theme and is too self-indulgent by half. Dr Thomas may yet produce an *Aequinimitas* or a *Natural History of Disease* but not until he is as willing to subject himself to the discipline of a disinterested editor's scalpel as he is to subject his own patients to the knife.

Bruce Hepburn

Miners Against Fascism

HYWEL FRANCIS *Lawrence & Wishart*
£12.50 & £4.95

The traditional image of the Britons who fought in the Spanish Civil War is of idealistic poets inspired by the Romantics. That misrepresentation has been corrected by recent studies which have shown that the British participants were predominantly working-class. Hywel Francis's book examines the background of the 160 Welsh volunteers to answer the question most often asked about the International Brigaders, 'Why did they go?'

He shows that they were a highly conscious working-class élite with a long record of trade union and political activity. Their decision to go to Spain was the logical outcome of their experience in the continuous struggles against victimisation, British fascism and the Means Test between 1925 and 1936.

The Communist Party shaped the understanding of this experience in South Wales and the volunteers came to regard the war in Spain in orthodox Communist terms, as the defence of a bourgeois republic in which the revolutionary POUM were necessarily suppressed. But this naivety does not detract from the heroism of their story. The letters from Spain at the end of the book testify to the volunteers' determination and to their readiness to put political commitment above any other loyalty. The modern cynic is rightly humbled by their resolve and courage.

This is a detailed study of a local movement and it makes few comparisons with events elsewhere in Britain in the 1930s. The absence of a wider perspective is disappointing because the Welsh

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miners' history is all the more remarkable in the context of the apathy in most industrial areas. Contrary to the Left's expectations, revolutionary consciousness was not generated spontaneously by mass unemployment, but developed only where a legacy of struggle against the state existed. This book does not discuss the implications of the conclusion that militants of a high calibre are not forged overnight.

Dr Francis's work bears traces of academic dutifulness, particularly in his chapter on the marginal activity of the Welsh intelligentsia, but his lengthy research has enabled him to utilise a wide range of written and oral sources and has furnished a splendid set of illustrations.

Graham Field

Scenes in America Deserta

REYNER BANHAM *Thames & Hudson* £4.95

How does one write about desert? Especially about the American desert, where in addition to the absence of rainfall and vegetation there is an absence of habitation? Emptiness, absence, solitude, vastness — it is not easy to communicate the experience of desert, which, as the cliché reminds us, unexpectedly teems with life and change. Reyner Banham contrasts America Deserta with the Arabia Deserta Charles Doughty so verbosely celebrated in 1888. The Arabian deserts were, and still are, peopled; they contain a history and culture that their American counterparts lack. The earliest works of man in America Deserta, other than *pueblo* dwellings found only in certain parts of the Southwest, are 19th-century or later: mines, churches, railways, hotels.

As an evocation of desert, *Scenes in America Deserta*, now reissued in paperback, does not fully succeed. Banham is a good writer but the virtues of his book are less literary than perceptual. He can see the beauty in a disused mine or abandoned watering hole without indulging in sentimentality or inverse snobbery. He is stimulating when he writes about the structures of the desert, contemplating the notion of what can be construed as appropriate architecture in an environment so lacking in support for any human endeavour. Whether it's a Spanish mission near Tucson, or the solar telescope high on Kitt Peak, or Soleri's fantastical utopian structures — Banham is unfailingly illuminating.

Interesting too is his probing of the attitudes desert freaks bring to the arid wilderness of the Mojave or Wyoming's Great Divide Basin. He recognises in himself a Protestant desire for exposure; desert can be admired for its harshness as much as for its beauty. As an art historian Banham came to many landscapes already conditioned by recorded images, whether Crome's Norfolk or Claude's Italy. America Deserta, though, assaulted senses that were unprepared, and he claims his response to it is as close as he'll ever get to a pure aesthetic response. That sounds plausible and perhaps it also explains why the book communicates the exhilaration of that confrontation more than the nature of what was responded to.

Stephen Brook

The Roots of Treason: Ezra Pound and the Secrets of St Elizabeth's

E. FULLER TORREY *Sidgwick & Jackson* £12.95 & £8.95

This biography is, as its subtitle suggests, notable for the new information it discloses about the 'madness' that saved Pound from a treason trial in 1946 and resulted in his committal instead to St Elizabeth's Hospital for the Criminally Insane, where he remained 12 years, receiving special privileges for most of the time. Pound's slide into political renegadism had begun in 1920, when he embraced the ideas of C.H. Douglas, whose anti-Semitic denunciations of usury cohered with his ingrained prejudices. Resident in Italy from 1925 (though still a US citizen), Pound also became a fervent admirer of Mussolini's fascism. The two ideologies combined to provide the material for the vituperative propaganda broadcasts he undertook, at his own instigation, over Rome Radio between 1941 and 1943.

It has long been surmised that, after the war, a covert deal led to Pound being declared mentally unfit to stand trial. Torrey, a psychiatrist, reveals no definite 'arrangement' but a suspicious conjunction of events. The defence saw insanity as the safest way out; Pound, unnerved by the executions of Laval, Quisling and Lord Haw-Haw, accordingly displayed symptoms when necessary. Conveniently, the chief psychiatrist for the prosecution, the eminent Winfred Overholser (Superintendent of St Elizabeth's), was determined that Pound should not be tried. Aided by the ineptitude (or worse) of the Justice Department's attorneys, he ensured that Pound was judged insane, suppressing contrary

diagnoses in the process. And that was only the start. Had Pound's 'condition' improved, he could still have been brought to trial. For 12 years, Overholser asserted that he remained mentally incompetent, despite overwhelming evidence to the opposite. Finally, in 1958, Overholser testified that Pound was permanently insane, but not in need of hospital care. The charges were dropped; Pound was released. Overholser's misconduct is the most intriguing aspect of the case. Torrey suggests various motivations, but all seem rather flimsy given the professional risks he ran.

Elsewhere in the book, while saying little of value about Pound's writings, Torrey provides an account of his subject's life that is sufficiently economical and accurate to make it a handy alternative to fatter biographies. But that new information remains his greatest asset.

David Montrose

Wonderful Adventures of Mrs Seacole in Many Lands

MARY SEACOLE *Falling Wall Press* £7.50 & £3.95

A cottage industry is beginning to develop around the exploits of 'Mother' Seacole, a Jamaican Creole who became a Victorian celebrity for her work as a nurse in the Crimean War and then sank into obscurity for the next hundred years or so. In 1980 her achievements were celebrated in 'Roots In Britain', a touring exhibition which outlined the contribution that black people have made to this society since Elizabethan times and earlier. The exhibition aroused more interest in the details of Seacole's life; the next logical step was for the 'Roots. . .' organisers, Ziggi Alexander and Audrey Dewjee, to bring out a new edition of her memoirs, which hadn't seen the light of day since 1857. It surely can't be long before we have a 'District Nurse'-type television series made about her.

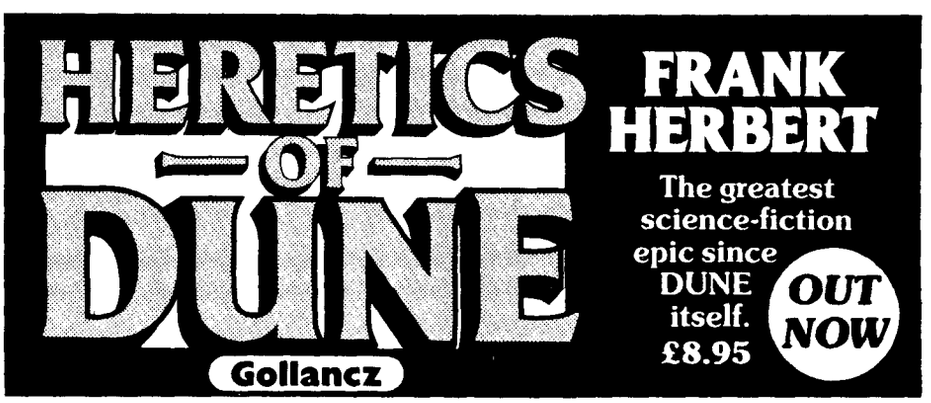
Seacole was a 'doctress' by vocation. She spent her early years travelling around the Caribbean and Central America, running hostels and treating victims of cholera and yellow fever epidemics. A true Empire loyalist, she sailed to England to volunteer for work in the Crimean hospitals. Despite her proven skills, her colour ('a few shades darker than the brunettes whom you all admire so much') counted against her, and she was eventually forced to pay her own way to the battlefield. She opened up her British Hotel two miles from Balaclava and soon became as popular with the troops as Florence Nightingale herself. The memoirs end on her return — bankrupt — to England at the end of the war. She died in London in 1881.

It may sound at first like a perfect film role for a blacked-up Anna Neagle, but these are memories recounted with a sharp tongue.

The description of the battle scenes is raw, and there are some wonderfully under-stated gibes at the genteel racial prejudice of the genteel English. The crasser American variety comes in for a hammering too. Seacole relates how one group of expatriate Americans in Panama — whose lives she's saved during an epidemic — propose a toast to her at a special dinner. They praise her nursing skills, but lament the fact that she's a 'yaller woman' whose skin can't be bleached to make her acceptable.

The satire has its limits, though. Seacole is proud of her mixed heritage, but never analyses the central paradox of her life — her pride in a country which despises mulattoes. A few veiled references suggest a certain bitterness, but Seacole is an optimist at heart. Which is probably just as well. She needed to sell as many copies of the memoirs as possible to make up for her Crimean losses, and it's doubtful whether her well-to-do audience would have been happy to invest in a book which dissected too many of their failings. All in all, she's a highly unlikely black heroine: more English than the English in many respects. But that, I suspect, is what makes her even more fascinating.

Clive Davis



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Camera Press

NEW YORK THEATRE
Benedict Nightingale

Lullaby of Broadway

DESPERATE TIMES demand desperate measures. The other day someone even convened a brains trust of critics, in hopes of discovering what they could do to save the Broadway theatre from oblivion. The answer wanly emerged: nothing, except keep writing, keep personal standards reasonably high and keep hoping. Indeed, the occasion was memorable mainly for a fraternal squabble between Clive Barnes of the *New York Post*, who took an optimistic and perhaps Panglossian view of the prospects for the American theatre, and John Simon of *New York* magazine, whose crustier opinion was that Broadway should die as quickly as possible, perhaps to be reborn in some new form. John made it apparent he classified Clive among the 'bums and swine'; Clive riposted by calling John a 'Yugoslavian', which in origin he is. Then up leapt the producer David Susskind, to launch a violent but incomprehensible attack on the platform, while the platform chorused 'sit down, Mr Susskind'. The rest of us munched sandwiches and pondered.

Meanwhile, the New York theatre went its own way, which continued to be downhill. Every now and then English voices are to be heard eagerly echoing down my phone. What is there for a visitor to enjoy in fun city? The response my end is usually a long, indecisive gurgle. Ah, um, there's the musical *La Cage Aux Folles*, though its transvestite charms have been over-rated. And *42nd Street*, which is nice, sentimental hokum, still seems to be running. But straight stuff... well, David Mamet's salesman-saga *Glengarry Glen Ross* and Tom Stoppard's *Real Thing* have already been seen in London, haven't they? If one discounts them, the only unmissable play would be Sam Shepard's powerful *Fool for Love*.

Take Mamet, add Shepard, and you've just run through a more or less complete list of the genuinely interesting American playwrights currently producing work. Still, others are to be heard on the stairs, and a few are already on the landing, knocking at the door: Marsha Norman, Christopher Durang and, I suppose, Wendy Wasserstein, whose *Isn't It Romantic?* is the big hit Off Broadway right now. This is a captivating little comedy about two old chums and their attempts to find independence and identity in the metropolis: which mainly involves a feverish coming-to-terms with maternal power. One, seemingly the more liberated, is evidently destined to become a spun-nylon copy of her mother. The other ends by forcing her mum, who is apt to arrive at 7 a.m. with unwanted gifts and importunate advice, to stand outside her apartment door shouting 'my daughter is a grown woman'.

No one familiar with what it's tempting to dub 'diaper drama' will be surprised to learn, first, that the rebellious daughter is 30 years old, second, that Miss Wasserstein sees her rebellion as a moral and spiritual triumph. Society, civilisation, the planet Earth itself may be on the skids; but for many American playwrights the great contemporary question is whether, how and at what age grown-up people should finally dispose of their nappies, or diapers, and stand up to their sires and dams.

It is not a new obsession, as a revival of Clifford Odets's *Awake and Sing!* recently arrived on Broadway to prove. Bessie Berger, matriarch and tyrant, successfully destroys her son Ralph's embryonic love affair. At the end he learns to assert himself, as does his sister, by running away with a long-time admirer from the husband her mother chose for her. It is the same old story, yet not the same old story. Odets wrote when the Depression was beginning to bite, and saw the awful social and economic pressures that were driving Bessie to act as she does. In his hands a diaper drama wasn't just a pocket event clammily derived from the pages of Freud or some Freud-substitute. It was political, too.

The production of *Awake and Sing!* is poorish — another reminder of the difficulty of staging tricky classics with an ad-hoc cast, another argument for an American National Theatre — but at least it serves to point out the inadequacies of its present-day progeny. Many occur in a social vacuum. All lack a context strongly enough defined to explain or help explain personal conduct. The latest of a dozen recent examples would, I suppose, be the big musical that shambled into town the other week.

The Rink, as it's called, offers Chita Rivera as the feisty owner of a dilapidated roller-skate emporium and Liza Minnelli as her daughter, an over-age waif in forlorn flight from the ashes of the Californian 1960s; and it mostly consists of fake-torrid recrimination and fake-poignant reconciliation, all couched in the language of Channel Two on a slow Tuesday night: 'We scream, we hate, we yell — we do everything but talk,' 'why can't you forgive me?' 'it's not so easy, mama, we're talking about my entire life', 'it's OK, it's OK, it's OK.' Rarely can old hat and old rope have got so fatally enmeshed.

One sign of the current dereliction of Broadway is that *The Rink* was the only show of any kind to open in any of its 39 theatres the entire length of February. Another, more depressing still, was the fate of Shirley Lauro's *Open Admissions*, the one new American play to receive its première on the Great White Way so far this year. Beneath what was, admittedly, a lot of conventional padding, something exceedingly rare made its presence intermittently felt: a work of force and passion about a topical subject, namely a higher-education policy that tantalises the poor with dreams of escape from the ghetto, yet fails to ensure they are minimally literate in the first place. The climax, a raging confrontation between an uncomprehending black and his helpless teacher, left you feeling that something had sunk its teeth into the nape of your neck and given it a good shake. But Broadway audiences don't like to be too radically churned; and the play collapsed after a week or so.

Still, there's a low chauvinistic comfort to be taken in all this. New York's failure continues to be London's opportunity. With Caryl Churchill's *Fen* thriving at the Public Theatre, Billie Whitelaw playing Beckett in a long, thin, coffin-like auditorium on 42nd Street, C.P. Taylor's nostalgic *And A Nightingale Sang* at Lincoln Centre, *Cats* selling out at the Winter Gardens, Michael Frayn's *Noises Off* at the Brooks Atkinson and Jeremy Irons bringing his willowy charisma to *The Real Thing* at the Plymouth — well, an English visitor will certainly have a strong sense of *déjà vu* in the Big Apple these days. He or she could take in *Oh Calcutta!*, jauntily revived on 47th Street, and have a strong sense of *déjà nu* as well. Alternatively, of course, they could stay home in what the late Ken Tynan called 'the old grey parish of tall taxis' — and see next year's American theatre before it happens. □

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THEATRE
Paul Allen

Gravy train

Starlight Express
RICHARD STILGOE and ANDREW LLOYD WEBBER
Apollo Victoria
Henry V and
A Midsummer Night's Dream
SHAKESPEARE *Stratford-upon-Avon*
Checking Out
MARCELLA EVARISTI
Lyric Studio, Hammersmith
Alice
ANTHONY PHILLIPS and RICHARD SCOTT
Leeds Playhouse

Those of us who argue that the theatre is important because it provides more direct images of our society than any other art form, must take the rough with the smooth. The Apollo Victoria has been turned into a mighty showcase for that sunrise industry, British theatre design. John Napier has created a vast adventure playground of roller-skating tracks that cut a swathe through the stalls and sweep up to the circle; a massive turntable is hung from a crane above the stage itself; and the cast, all playing trains (in both senses), are helmeted heroes in gorgeous colours somewhere between *Ivanhoe* and *Star Wars*.

It is about a third of the way through that you realise the turntable is so big that it leaves room for nothing else to happen; that you can't actually follow the train races either over your shoulder or on the closed circuit TV; and that, whatever else is possible on roller skates, acting isn't — not for this cast, anyway.

You then have another hour and a half to discover that this is one of those Andrew Lloyd Webber shows where the best music is merely pastiche. The loudest laugh of the evening greets a parody of a Tammy Wynette hit, sung by a dining car called (you guessed!) Dinah, after she has been rejected by her diesel-engine lover: the song is 'U.N.C.O.U.P.L.E.D'.

The story concerns a series of engine races in America in which an old steam engine (Rusty) takes on his more modern rivals and, in a plot that is twee, unconvincing and unfunny, manages to beat them and get the girl. The Starlight Express of the title is the Great Train in the Sky, which Rusty believes in, though he has to dig deep into his spiritual self to find faith.

Does any of this matter? Not if you have a good time and don't mind that the women are all carriages. There is Arlene Phillips's choreography to enjoy, even on skates, and especially a number called 'Right Place, Right Time', which is danced by three boxcars called Rocky I, II, and III. **Starlight Express** will be a great tourist attraction and can then be sold off to America, and that's what Britain's all about, right?

Trevor Nunn, who directs, should return to the RSC, where a much more witting image of Britain is provided in **Henry V**, a first post-Falklands production which has the power to confront an audience all over again with that appalling mixed emotion of wanting 'our boys' to win (and even relishing the rhetoric which makes it feasible when it is Shakespeare's rather than the *Sun*'s) while recognising the horror and futility of the war itself.

As usual, Adrian Noble achieves his effects more pictorially than through a sharpened clarity of the text. In fact, Kenneth Branagh's excellent troubled boy-hero Henry, leading his men out of a shared nightmare like some David Gower taking over the decimated England cricket team in a very foreign field, is flawed only by his failure to make some lines make sense. But what pictures! The French, hubristically confident before Agincourt, rising to the stage in a bright sea of gold; Bardolph executed for looting before our horrified eyes and the king's; and the slaughtered bodies of the English camp-followers left on stage until the end of the play.

Also at Stratford, Sheila Hancock's touring production of **A Midsummer Night's Dream** has reached the Other Place. More than most productions, it conveys a sense of men learning to see the world through women's perceptions and experiences, thanks mainly to a thoughtful Theseus (Roger Allam) and pointed Hippolyta (Penny Downie). The mechanicals, led by Philip Jackson as Bottom, are rooted in reality and get funnier as they go on. But much else that goes on in the Forest of Arden seems arbitrary and uncompelling.

The plotting of **Checking Out** is not only contrived but has a habit of taking place off-stage. Yet Marcella Evaristi's oblique approach to the contemporary feminist theme of the connections between sexism, violence and pornography still manages to pack a dramatic and surprisingly comic punch. This is partly due to her gift for the crackling dialogue of two Glaswegian women in London, descending from chambermaid status via modelling at the Motor Show to Soho hostess-ship and final rebellion, and partly to the beautiful playing of Elaine Collins and Terry Neason. Chris Parr directs.

And so back to the modern musical. **Alice** bears little relationship to Lewis Carroll, though there is a Caterpillar who plays a cool saxophone instead of smoking a hookah, and a Red Queen who terrifies everybody. She threatens not to cut off people's heads but to administer 'bulk erasure'. For this is set in the future, and Alice is not dreaming but has joined a group of rebels determined to overthrow a world that has become so computerised that dreams aren't possible and 'joy' has become something for which you set aside a compulsory minute every day. Less *Alice* than *Brave New World*.

The story is as slight as *Starlight Express*, but at least it concerns people. The hi-tech wizardry is less impressive by far. But, after a slow opening quarter, *Alice* develops into a rousing show with excellent, wide-ranging music (by Anthony Phillips, once of Genesis). The mainly young company, directed by Nicholas Hytner, performs stylishly and with infectious enthusiasm. They know they aren't there to risk life and limb decorating the scenery. □

TELEVISION
Hugo Williams

Plunder

SUNDAY NIGHT was runaway night on ITV. First, **The South Bank Show** did Kathy Acker, author of the highly successful *Blood and Guts in High School* and latest star of the SoHo avant-garde art world. Acker was inspired to quit her affluent mid-town Jewish background and get revolutionised by the Seventies incursion of the Sex Pistols and other punk bands. 'I never knew who my father was. My mother hated me. The only love I ever got was through sex, which I had very early.' The punk movement showed her how to make art out of her life. 'It was a time of despair, but also of being able to act out your despair.'

Experts called in by **The American Documentary: Whatever Happened to Lori Jean Lloyd** (ITV) to explain why over a million children run away from home every year, came up with the stimulating concept that in 99 per cent of the cases they had analysed it had been due largely to the fact that they didn't get on with their parents. This seemed to hit the nail squarely on the head. Lori's parents have been hunting her for over four years, but, so far, despite pressure on this documentary from its sponsors to come up with a quarry, she has managed to stay ahead of them.

If Kathy Acker's mother was ever ignorant of her daughter's youthful activities, she isn't any more. As Kathy told us, she was working in peep-shows and sex films a few blocks away on 42nd street. She now lives in a bombed-out building in the terminally chic Lower East Side, an area full of petty gangsters, whores and pimps. However, 'living where there's lots of hookers is safe — they think I'm a hooker and nobody mugs a hooker.' One of her stories describes her part of town in terms of pre-revolutionary Petersburg: 'If I make one city into another, who knows what might happen?' What did she think of the writers of the Sixties, Malamud, Roth, Mailer? 'Superfluous. I wasn't interested in the beautiful sentences of John Updike. It had no meaning for *me*. It was as if, being female, I had to be male. I wanted my own language.'

She found her own language by 'plundering', as she put it, the works of male writers from Genet to Shakespeare. We glimpsed a page of argument between Juliet and 'Janey'. 'Here's Keats,' she said, 'he's wonderful. Oh, and this is from Ben Jonson's *Volpone*. My hope is that I'll learn something, that I'll land up somewhere I don't know about.' It sounded like a writer talking, but when you heard passages of her own stuff read out it seemed to have little more than the vagueness and repetition of the Beats: 'City of people who don't live here, City of artists, City of pushers and bums, yes, you baby. . .'

The film proved more interesting in its non-literary moments. Now that Acker has joined the glamorous NY art people, she works out

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with Nautilus equipment. 'Body-building is the physical form of my writing,' she said. 'I decide the way each muscle should look. I'm basically choosing my appearance in the world. This is a very radical thing to do.' At a photo-session with Robert Mapplethorpe she found that being photographed was also 'the same sort of thing I do in my fiction, letting my identity fluctuate into other identities'. I wish she wrote as well as she talked.

John Cage, one of **Four American Composers** (C4), complained how some people took his music too seriously and some not seriously enough. He seemed to lean towards the latter. Next time I hear a striking match, a crunch of celery or a bunch of students banging on desks, I promise to reassess the seriousness quotient of these noises.

Hardly a week passes without a new youth or record promo magazine opening up on TV. **Earsay** (C4) is the latest anxiously thrusting example. They don't bother me in the least, but I imagine they might get on the wick of some of the theatres and orchestras currently being de-funded or exiled by the government's survival-of-the-fattest policies.

Once In A Lifetime (C4) was a one-off hybrid made by, rather than about, premier US band Talking Heads, a rapid-fire montage of pictures and music tracing David Byrne's interest in mystical dancing and trance, whirling dervishes wrapped across NY street breakers, shots of the band intercut with gospel singers and faith healers, while Byrne himself mimicked the spasms of Voodoo and his cheering audience became different crowds cheering and clapping all over the world. 'I may be misunderstanding the music of other cultures,' he said, 'but I don't think it matters if we can immerse ourselves in one identity for 30 seconds. It justifies the whole thing.'

Listening to the wonderful music of David Byrne and Tina Weymouth after the frantic experimentation of Kathy Acker, one had to admit that most writing today is a clumsy provincial exercise beside the best of the music, a kind of psychotherapy for the sad or, in the case of the thousands of American poets, a voluntary jumble-collecting activity which provides the raw material for universities to pick over, dry clean and recycle at a profit. □

Watershed/University of Bristol Department of Extra-Mural Studies 22nd-27th July

FILM SUMMER SCHOOL 84

Bristol's second Film Summer School focuses on 'art' and 'classic' cinema, examining their history and contemporary role.

Two feature films will be screened each day, including **The Draughtsman's Contract, Metropolis, Apocalypse Now, Born in Flames** and **La Regle du Jeu,** together with two seminars and one presentation.

Tutors: **Jane Root,** freelance journalist and film distributor (Cinema of Women). **Steve Neale,** Lecturer in Film Studies, University of Kent. **Liz Bird,** Staff Tutor in Sociology, University of Bristol. **Steve Pinhay,** Director Watershed

Guest Speakers: **Mick Eaton,** film-maker. **Peter Sainsbury,** Head of British Film Institute Production Division.

Fee:
Residential: £110 (£88 concessions)
Non-residential: £44 (£22 concessions)

Further details and enrolment from:
Liz Bird, Department of Extra-Mural Studies, *University of Bristol,* 32 Tyndalls Park Road, Bristol BS8 1HR. Tel: (0272) 24161 ex. 688.

This event is supported by SEFT and the BFI Education Division.

FILMS
John Coleman

Killing time

Swann in Love (18)
Lumiere
The Country Girls (PG)
Minema
By Design (18)
Gate, Bloomsbury
High Road to China (PG)
Odeon, Marble Arch
City of Lost Souls
ICA

With great charm and even greater prescience, the German director Volker Schlöndorff briefly addressed us before the press showing of his **Swann in Love** the other morning. The gist of his remarks was this: 'If you've read Proust, try to forget it' and — here comes the unusually good-guessing plea — 'Compare the film rather to the rest opening this week than to Proust's masterpiece'. For certainly the pictorialisation and the playing of this small fragment from *A la recherche du temps perdu,* scripted by Peter Brook with Jean-Claude Carrière and Marie-Hélène Estienne, are great boulevards ahead of what else is newly on offer. And, as a matter of confessional fact, I am peculiarly well placed to 'forget' Proust in that, after several false starts down the years, I have succeeded only in finishing *Du côté de chez Swann* (*Swann's Way*).

But it is exactly from the second part of this opening section of the enormous work that Schlöndorff's film is drawn — the obsessional love of the Jewish aesthete Swann for the *demi-mondaine* Odette de Crécy, in this version distilled into 24 hours with some flashbacks and a rueful coda 15 years on — and from a reading of *Swann's Way* alone one is surely entitled to say that Proust lends himself less to cinematic transference than any other writer in world literature. One knows about mountains and scaling the damn things because they are there, but in the case of Proust, with his unique and all-important preoccupations with the interaction of Time and Memory, the ironies and the insights he gained therefrom, the only conceivable outcome of trying to shove him up on the screen must be a quite wilful scaling-down, not just a textual but a textural loss that amounts to wholesale distortion. Take the protest, then, as registered.

What we have is a supremely elegant entertainment, mostly enacted during a day and night in the Paris of 1885, with a well-dubbed Jeremy Irons playing a wealthy *flâneur* of artistic taste and temperament, accepted in the highest aristocratic circles and salons but prepared to find sterling virtues in those at a crucially lower social level since his flighty, mendacious beloved (luscious Ornella Muti, at last out of Ben Gazzara's arms) is admired and — as it were — at home there. Proust is at his most Dickensian and wickedly funny in his depiction of Madame Verdurin (excellent Marie-Christine Barrault) and her appalling 'little group' at a late supper; and this, in fact, with gales of merriment at Doctor Cottard's egregious attempts at word-play, provides some of the film's best moments. Elsewhere, there is Alain Delon's diabolically mesmeric Baron de Charlus as Swann's ambiguous confidant, a tremendous appearance, and Fanny Ardant's charmingly arrogant Duchesse de Guermantes, a performance of equal potency. To give the screenplay its due, the words spoken seem to stay honestly faithful to Proust.

But the emphasis falls on period detail, on Odette's accoutrements, on getting the look of things right (and they do look awe-inspiringly right, down to the automobile that so distresses fastidious Charlus in the epilogue), on Sven Nykvist's stunning images of crowded salons and nocturnal streets — all this to such a degree that the masochistic self-torment of Irons as Swann, doomed to come back again and again to learn the worst about the past (and, alas for him, the present) of sly-smiling Muti's Odette, comes close at times to being swallowed up in, reduced by, so much visual upholstery. Yet it would be churlish not to allow the piece the courage of Schlöndorff's convictions. However misguided, there is a professionalism at work here — evident in little touches, fleeting instants of perfect performance — that merits acknowledgment.

Some 20 years ago Desmond Davis directed as his debut *Girl with Green Eyes,* the film Edna O'Brien scripted from her novel *The Lonely Girl.* Now the Minema has sensibly picked up Davis's **The Country Girls,** shown at last year's LFF and more recently on Channel Four. Once again Miss O'Brien has brought him a screenplay which, where it is good, is marvellous. This pre-dates the events through which Rita Tushingham and Lynn Redgrave suffered and giggled. Grave-faced Maeve Germaine is Kate, a studious, romantic lass damned in a drunken dad, growing up in a County Clare village: time the 1950s. Winning a scholarship against odds to a convent school, she and feckless, privileged, would-be sophisticate Baba (Jill Doyle, relishing every scrap of a plum part) get up to mischief, Baba the goad.

It is their mutual antics and despairs that keep matters fresh and astringent. Sam Neill does what he can with unhappily married Mr Gentleman, of the grand car and woeful countenance, with whom Kate finally consummates an affair, only — inevitably — to be let down. These O'Brien men (see Peter Finch's brave go at writer Gaillard in the earlier film) are never as all there as the girls. Yet the final memory of this dexterously directed occasion is up-beat and gladdening.

Claude Jutra's Canadian **By Design,** about a very agreeable and attractive lesbian couple (Patty Duke Astin and Sara Botsford), one of whom wants a baby but both of whom get pregnant, has its false-simplicities: it also has a lot of humour and honesty. Brian G. Hutton's 1920s **High Road to China** is a toshy adventure yarn, endurable when airborne, so grounded elsewhere that not even Clark Gable and Jean Arthur in the Tom Selleck and Bess Armstrong roles (drunk pilot, spoilt socialite) could have saved it. As for **City of Lost Souls,** Americans on a campy ego-stumble in Berlin, let's leave it that way. □

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DANCE
Stephanie Jordan

Ups and downs

Ballet Rambert
Sadler's Wells

Richard Alston's latest work for Ballet Rambert immediately establishes a liaison of choreographer and dancers. **Voices and Light Footsteps** uses all the classical inner strength that the dancers have developed since he joined the company, while making the most of their fleet-footedness and freedom of motion.

An extension of the brief trio *Bellezza Flash,* commissioned for LWT's *South Bank Show* in 1982, *Voices* looks as if it poured forth easily. The early material has opened out and blossomed into a mature and full statement, a widening of Alston's perspective on the composer Monteverdi: by adding other *Scherzi Musicali* and several madrigals, Alston has emphasised the contrast between the composer's boisterous extroversion and his frequent snap swerves into a sobbing, erotic anguish. There could hardly be a more apt intellectual context than the implied Venetian Commedia of the Peter Mumford decor and Candida Cook costumes, like blue-and-rose-period Picasso across floor and backdrop.

In sections for the three women (led by Catherine Becque) and for the six men, voices and dancers race to the surface. Then there is a solo for Ikky Maas set to the slow interpolation in *Zefiro torna,* the words of which refer to the poet's loneliness and sorrow among pastoral surroundings. Maas, perhaps personifying Petrarchan dolour of love, covers his face, sinks to the ground (thus had the women ended their trio, the move recalling a similar sudden touch of drama in Balanchine's *Serenade*); he cannot yet accept the attention of a friend (Hugh Craig). A slow, aristocratic duet for Mary Evelyn and Albert van Nierop lends significance to the simplest raising of the arms or bending of the knee. The intensity of this private moment is defused by a Cupid-like Becque and revellers. Though inwardly ecstatic, it remains courtly by contrast with the final *Interrotte speranze* where the crucial relationship between the poet and his companion is secured but the yearning remains still unresolved.

The individuality of costume reflects the distinct and sympathetic aspect that Alston has drawn from each of his dancers. Our knowledge of them is now much enriched. Especially gratifying is his treatment of Evelyn, who has never before looked so confident and gracious in this company. Performing the *Bellezza* material, she is the one who best bears comparison with the original cast, calmer but clear and assured in the Siobhan Davies role and wonderfully free in the upper body. I missed the Tom Jobe/Michael Clark combination of speed with fluidity and easy generous swing of the body.

Christopher Bruce has recently been so excited by late Janacek that he has used his music for two new pieces and adopted the musical title for each: **Concertino** and **Intimate Pages.** Both are designed by the Dutch artist, Walter Nobbe. The first is an abstract work for four women and four men, with a positively marked dance theme: a swirl of the skirt and heel click for Lucy Bethune, proud and militant to match the musical statement, after which the mood lightens gradually into a jolly finale for four couples. For the other, more intriguing work, Bruce provides a programme note on the autobiographical content of the music: it depicts Janacek's love for Kamila

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Stosslova, and is also the expression of anguish over his unhappy marriage and the death of his children. If the implication is there, Bruce is still content with reflections — of the tortured Grahamesque kind — rather than verisimilitude.

Robert North's **Entre dos Aguas** professes to mix flamenco and jazz, so it begins with some stilted, moody stuff to synthesiser, guitars and percussion hotted up by Lucy Burge's strutting and dangerous whizzing among the lads in a coral pink trouser suit. Then the real fun begins, as North and Co. bring the house down with a colourful, joyous *presto* routine: some unusual lifts fluently achieved, otherwise not even the semblance of invention.

Colour Moves manifests much the same sort of choreographic method. It has bright, attractive, giftwrapping backcloths and costumes by Bridget Riley, progressing in stages from mono- to polychrome. Nothing wrong here, just pizza-parlour pleasantry.

Glen Tetley's amiably entitled **Murderer Hope of Women** is based on a post-Strindbergian utterance of 1909 by Oskar Kokoschka. It is endearing to think of the fears and mystery surrounding the opposite sex in the minds of bourgeois males in the confident days before 1914, but, in a less egocentric age, it all seems merely risible. Tetley clearly takes its message seriously (or expects us to), thereby preventing the piece from assuming period charm, and he simply uses avid chat (translations of ejaculatory aphorisms and ululations) to distract us from the thinness of invention, preposterous posturing and spine-wrenching convulsion. We felt embarrassment that such a company should be devoting energy and the considerable resource of the 1983 Tennent Caledonian Award to such a monstrous venture. But the Ballet Rambert's turnover of work is healthy and brisk, so we might never have to suffer the piece again.

WEEKEND COMPETITION

No 2816 **Set by E.O. Parrott**

In line with the reported meeting of the Eddy Grundy Fan Club, to celebrate his 'birthday', compers are asked to suggest suitable plans for an evening for the fans of Dracula, Hilda Ogden, J.R., Pooh, Uriah Heep, or any other fictional character. Max. 150 words by 19 April.

No 2813 **Set by Ellen Brigwell**

Poems including a maximum of unintentional ambiguities.

Report **by Babe Bio**

Hear we go again: sex; sex; sex. Their are *other* jokes, you know. As a matter of fact, the more I begin to know about your generashion (and that includes whatever parents I find when I get home tonight), the more I think that the Puritern Backlash (no, that's *not* a form of flagelashion) can't be upon us too soon. Then, perhaps, you can tern your minds to geting rid of cruise, compulsery education and VAT on Uhu. Anyway, theirs ten pounds eech to the folowing.

To Johann Cruyff

Possessor of so many a Dutch cap
And teaser of the tightly guarded rear,
Upon whom millions have bestowed the clap
That never dies away from year to year;
Whose balls have been the envy of the earth,
So sweetly slid between opponents' legs
To give an ancient game new life and birth
Like chicks emerged from long-infertile eggs;
Up front you were so delicate and gay
But still, when needed, you'd withdraw, and like
Your famous fellow-Hollander you'd play
As boldly with your finger in the dyke.

BASIL RANSOME-DAVIES

Song of the Nascent Apple Tree

Thunder breaks; and I catch the clap,
And feel, in the same vein, such a sap
As a germ that's burst in an unseen spot
Where the subsoil once was not so hot,
And I feel, in my bottom, wind blow free
While I rise through earth. I am out of my tree,
The seed of myself, giving Nature a turn
As my pips squeak of life, of burning yearn
To grow into forests, truly thick
From simplest twig to the oldest stick.
I'm a lush, an explosive shade of green
Throwing up my heart in the woods, unseen.

WILL BELLENGER

I live my life — on a gloomy Plane —
No Jesting Pilate I —
A Stewardess of Grief and Pain —
On wings of Discord fly.

I long for Death — yet drift on — bored —
A warning dire should be —
About me — as I go abroad —
I'm Emily — Fly Me!

PETER NORMAN

From The Barset Bugle: *'In Praise of Our Local Member'*

An AA member, *toujours gai,*
Our member with himself does play,
For want of other partners, chess.
Observe the expert eagerness
With which he seeks to consummate
His foreplay with a skilful mate.
The busy queen's keen appetite
A bishop first and then a knight
Briskly bangs — across the board,
Triumphantly, again he's scored!

TERRY TOWLING

Invalid Thoughts

Beside the bed, there's nothing much to see,
And still I lie here, tossing restlessly;
The nurse is plain, although my vision's blurred,
She sits there with her tea, she has not stirred.

My liver's in a mess, my pudding too,
My water's hardly drinkable, and you
My friend, 'tis vain the silent watch you keep,
The mattress ticking keeps me from my sleep.

And oh! this dreadful draught! it's very chill,
Yet I must swallow it, for I am ill,
Yes, ill and bent — I've never felt so queer,
I tell you straight, true as I'm lying here.

GERARD BENSON

FIRST PERSON

Bill Greenwell

Cash on delivery

MODERN CONCEPTS of banking have brought new wrinkles of pleasure to the distended transactions of personal finance. Gone is the business of lugging your swag-bag of cheques, biros, wild smiles and plastic wallets into a mumbling interior. We use a machine now. There is no need for speech. We may press buttons and have a jolly time on the pavement. Three documents which have fallen recently into my clutch offer insights into The New Money.

1) Cashpoint Etiquette: a crash-cash-course by Livia Tchekhsatoma: When approaching a cash-point for the first time, the lady or gentleman should be fully apprised of those little niceties which oil the wheels of modern commerce. Everybody has a secret number, but it simply does not do to divulge one's private digits in public. It is also simply not on to look, *or even be suspected of looking*, at the numbers of a fellow-customer.

As you approach the queue, turn slightly away from the line and release a smart, discreet cough. This is an acceptable signal of your arrival, for which everyone will be grateful.

It is of course imperative to keep one's eyes upon the console, so as to prevent unnecessary delay, either to yourself or to another. My personal recommendation is *the four-finger tap*. For this, you must position your eyes so that they seem half-closed, part your lips a little and touch, in turn, the four fingers on the left hand with the index finger of the right. This manoeuvre, best accompanied by a faint murmur, will afford you a small glimpse of the Cashpoint. It will also indicate to bystanders that your secret number is so dreadfully difficult to remember that there is scant reason for another to scrutinise your actions when it is your turn.

Rather than risk eye-contact, which will arouse suspicions in others as in yourself, it is safest to eliminate the possibility of it entirely. Gazing skywards is an acceptable ploy, but may crick the neck quite seriously. My own suggestion is that, in the case of Ladies, you inspect the pavement for cracks, traces of unswept litter and the like, or else glaze your eyes and scour the street for pedestrians with whom you may be fancied to have a rendezvous.

Gentlemen are better suited to *Wall-eye*. This is a procedure involving the minute scrutiny of the bank's exterior surface at eye-level, and at an approximate distance of two inches. This will be familiar to the users of conveniences and the receptacles provided therein for the disposal of waste fluids. At the Cashpoint, Wall-Eye is best accompanied by a *soft sideways shuffle* as the

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queue shortens. Please do note, this secondary stage is for the Cashpoint only. Daydreamers accustomed to Wall-eye should beware of 'following through' in other contexts.

At the Cashpoint, *do not look back*. Instead, place your shoulder firmly against the bank wall, with the right (or left) arm at right angles to the ground. This will block the vision of the person immediately behind you. Now, use your free hand to key in answers to any queries or instructions displayed. This posture requires practice if you are to insert your cash-card on the far side, but will spare many blushes.

Should you forget your number at the third attempt, mime all the succeeding actions (removal of card, money, etc.) to prevent the queue becoming embarrassed on your behalf.

2) Memo from MidWest branch manager to Head Office: Sir, I write to you on behalf of 16 of our customers who had occasion to use the Cashpoint situated outside our branch in the small hours of Monday morning.

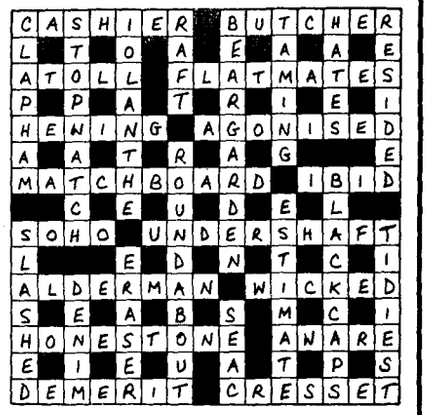
It would appear that one of our computer programmers has a sense of humour, a quality not generally considered congruent with modern MidWest banking. For three hours, on the morning in question, the polite messages relayed to our Cashpoint customers (I refer to our accepted pleasantries, as in 'You have exceeded your cash limit. Please enter a lower sum') were replaced by others less conducive to good banking relationships.

The following are but a sample of those displayed on our Digital Screens in the place of the above-mentioned: 'You must be joking mate!'; 'What do you think we are, made of money?'; 'You don't have to push all the buttons just to see if they work'; 'Press odd numbers to move the laserbeams forwards or backwards, and even numbers to move left or right. Eliminate three extra-terrestrials, or score 5,000, and you get another go'; 'You have won second prize in a beauty competition. Collect £10'; 'Sorry. This machine's knackered. Try up the road.'

I trust that you will be good enough to initiate an investigation, and the culprit downgraded to trainee cashier. Yours faithfully (Illegible).

3) Message received by Chief Security Officer of Centrebank PLC and forwarded to the local constabulary: IVE ACCESSD YR HOLE SYSTEM ON MY DADS COMPUTER AND CRAKD YR COAD, ITS ALL PRIME NU'MBERS, IVE GOT A LIST OF YRS, IF YOU DONT PAYUP IMEDIATLY £58.83 ON MY ACCESSING COAD 7777 (SEVN-SEVN-SEVN-SEVN) IN ANY CASHPOINT, I WILL MOOVE MY UNDER-ELEVN ACCOWNT TO SOMONE ELSES BANK, BE SIDES YR ADS ARENT AS GOOD AS YR COMPETORS, LAST WARNING, A USER.

Solution to 1434

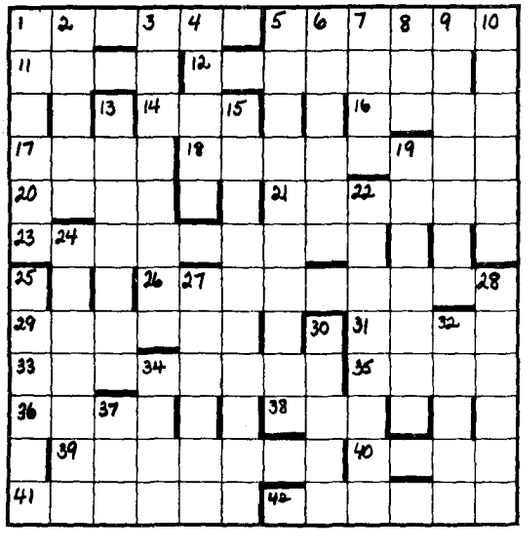


T.F. Appleyard (Rotherham, S. Yorks.)
L.B. Hill-Carter (Sydney, Australia)
G.R. Jappy (Aberdeen)

Salamanca 80

'Bo Jest'

PRIZES: £25 cheques for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Salamanca 80, New Statesman, 14-16 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU, by first post 1 May.



Eight answers whose clues consist entirely of secondary parts are of a kind (with others) in Brewer. Chambers 1983 edition is recommended for all others including the incorrect form of 15 and a prefix.

Name_____

Address_____

_____

_____

ACROSS

1 Like belief Communist had in State (6)
5 Pumpkin tree found planted in local chalk mostly (6)
11 Part in the middle: what part have you got? (4)
12 On which to sit and sing about success (7)
14 Twitch alternating on and off (3)
16 Black seed with a point may be so described? (4)
17 Scots minx may teasingly show this one time to half young males present? (4)
18 Manage a vintage model (8)
20 This circular could be dotty colour and indirect (4)
21 Doubtful one's in need of operation once (6)
23 Butter mixed with oil (9)
26 Storm rang wildly (9)
29 Pounded congas (6)
31 Ecclesiast who'll gabble without limits (4)
33 Wicked gent (if trapping child) can be fascinating (8)
35 Old lady's black bean (4)
36 Auk — an imaginary bird touching hearts (4)
38 Fish that's limited having no tail (as it were) (3)
39 Newcomer one time leading sheep (7)
40 Duck recognise intrinsic marks (4)
41 Cross, with sad (unloved) eye (heartless) (6)
42 Morses perhaps (central to Ximenes, but lacking tails) (6)

DOWN

1 Marx taking the lead (6)
2 Rich soil, permanent, you see, weeded (5)
3 What sailor carries with tidy tag knotted round breadth (8)
4 Sac — in it you'll find contents are pips (5)
5 Laughter? Cannot contain one's vulgar shaking, lacking rage (10)
6 Turning heads of bears, of deer (6)
7 Bullet, one moving slowly (4)
8 That low hill manner (3)
9 Could be a rod in the middle of burning (7)
10 Round? Reason fish is caught (6)
13 Cook boils it (7)
15 Falsely accuse me in actual conflict (10)
19 This moves about collecting us? (7)
22 See mists perhaps, without atmospheric pressure rising — something wrong with eye? (8)
24 Critically revise note about change of scene (7)
25 As a hermit's not ties you'll find him here? (6)
27 The big guns have arrived? (6)
28 Finely edged square (6)
30 Forest, one with ground surface by a river (5)
32 Pipe one packed full no Gentlemen held? (5)
34 Fellow that's left after taking tea (4)
37 Certainly it's not used by cooks? (3)

Solution to Salamanca 79

Unclued answers are some of the special calls in bingo. Title could indicate Little Jimmy, a game of luck, e.g. house, bingo or lotto. Split answers: top of the house (99), all the twos (22) — alternative, two little ducks, clickety-click (66), unlucky for some (13). NB 3 as (Ind)ian.

Prizewinners to Salamanca 79

Miss L. Bruce (Newton Abbot, Devon)
D.G. Tallis (Yarnton, Oxford)
Mrs C. Usher (Reading)

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LISTINGS

THURS 5 APRIL

LONDON Rally to protest against arrest and imprisonment of Sarah Tisdall and against control of 'official secrets'. 7.30pm Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, WC1. **Details: The Socialist Society, 9 Poland Street, W1. 01-734 8501/Sarah Benton, New Statesman 01-253 2003.**

FRI 6 APRIL

ESHER Public Meeting 'Defend the National Health Service' spkrs inc Gwynneth Dunwoody MP, Keith Vaz Labour Euro Candidate for Surrey West 7.30pm King George's Hall, High Street, Esher **Org Esher Labour Party.**

SAT 7 APRIL

BLACKHEATH South East London Women for Life on Earth Peace Day. 1.30pm-4.30pm Blackheath Friends (Quakers) House, Independents Rd, SE3. Stalls, skprs. etc.

LONDON 'The Future of Community Involvement in Penal and Police Institutions' day conf. 10.30am-4pm 20 Bloomsbury Way, WC1. Adm. £2/50p unwaged. **Org Labour Campaign for Criminal Justice, 103a Archel Rd, W14. 01-328 8741.**

KENT Conf. convened by Kent County Council NALGO and Kent Trade Union Alliance. 2 pm Community Hall, Beechings Way, Twydall, Gillingham. Spkrs incl. Nick Bradley, Area Officer, NUPE. **Details: Reg Humphreys, Kent NALGO Branch Office, County Hall, Maidstone. 671411.**

SUN 8 APRIL

LONDON 'The Knesset and Democracy in Israel' MAPAM meeting with Yair Tzaban, Knesset member. 8pm 37 Broadhurst Gdns, NW6. **Details: MAPAM 01-328 2554.**

LONDON Dinner for Isabel Letelier from Chile. 7pm Irish Centre, Murray St, Camden. Live Chilean music, 3-course meal. Tickets £5/£3 unwaged from **Chile Solidarity Campaign, 129 Seven Sisters Rd, N7. 01-272 4298.**

MON 9 APRIL

LONDON 'Keep the GLC working for London' Rally with Ken Livingstone 7.30pm Porchester Hall, Porchester Rd, W2.

WED 11 APRIL

RICHMOND "Defend the GLC" Public Meeting. Spkrs. incl. Dave Wetzel Chair of GLC Transport Committee and Tony Hart 8pm 57 Church Rd, Richmond, Surrey. **Details: Keith Vaz, 278-6452 (day) 878-5699 (eve) Org Richmond Labour Party.**

LONDON 'The Cause of Ireland' – winner of Tyne Award, Newcastle Film Festival 1983. 7.30pm Cinema Action, 27/28 Winchester Rd, NW6. £2/£1.50 unwaged.

THURS 12 APRIL

MANCHESTER 'International Nuclear Free Zones' Public Meeting. Sprks incl David Blunkett (Leader Sheffield City Council), Mayor of Nakano, Japan, Deputy Sec. Gen. Vittoria, Italy, Albert Donnay, Director of Nuclear Free America, etc. 8pm Renold Bldg. UMIST. **Orgs International Conf. of Nuclear Free Zone Local Authorities/ Greater Manchester CND. 061-248 7688.**

FRI 13 APRIL

LONDON Gay Humanist Group Meeting 'Notable Gay Humanists' (3) – Sir Angus Wilson. Spkr Jim Herrick. 7.30pm Library, Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq, WC1. **Details: Gay Humanist Grp, 34 Spring Lane, Kenilworth, Warwicks CV8 2HB 0026 58450.**

WAKEFIELD Anti-nuclear rally 7.30pm Unity Hall. Adm. 50p. **Details: Jim & Sally Whitman 0924 361490.**

HARLECH 'Peace Movements: Past & Present' conf. **Details: Llafur (Soc. for study of Welsh Labour History) & Coleg Harlech. Neil Evans, 0766 780363/780767 eves.**

SAT 14 APRIL

MANCHESTER CND Benefit Disco (late bar/food). 9pm-12.45am. Tickets £1.50/£1 unwaged UMIST Students Union. **Details: Greater Manchester CND 061-248 7688.**

WEST LONDON CND Easter Action. March from US Navy Base, West Ruislip (Assemble 10.30am) to HMS Warrior (Northwood) NATO Polaris(Trident Command Centre. **Details: Hillingdon CND on Uxbridge 55700/37361.**

LONDON Campaign for Press & Broadcasting Freedom conf. 'Media Freedom and the State' 10am-5pm County Hall. **Details: 01-437 2795.**

BIRMINGHAM CND 'Demo 'n' Die-in' 10.30am Chamberlain Square, Birmingham City Centre. **Org Birmingham CND 021-632 6909.**

NORTH LONDON CND march to nuclear war control bunker at Bentley Priory, Stanmore Common. Assemble 12.30pm outside Harrow Tube Stn. 2nd march assemble 1pm outside Edgware Tube Stn. Spkrs/music on arrival, picnic and decorating the fence. **Details: London Region CND 01-388 1628.**

LONDON 'Unite to fight racism and imperialism' Rally 7-10pm Large Hall, Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq, WC1. Adm. 50p/30p unwaged. **Details: BCM Box 5909, WC1N 3XX. 01-837 1688.**

NOTTINGHAM 'Disarmament and Independent Foreign Policy for Britain' discn. conf. at Nottingham University. **Details: Anne Kestenbaum, Bernard Russell Peace Fdn. 0602 708318.**

FORTHCOMING

16-18 APRIL BRIGHTON 3-day conf. 'Race, Gender and Class'. **Bookings and details: Mike Cole, A Block, Brighton Polytechnic, Falmer BN1 9PH. 0273 606622.**

18 APRIL HARINGEY Open day at Haringey Women's Training and Education Centre. 10am-12 noon Former Somerset Lower School, Lordship Lane, Tottenham, N17. **01-801 6233.**

21 APRIL HOLY LOCH, Dunoon. Scotland Easter Alert March. Assemble 11am Alexandra Parade, east of Cal-Mac Pier. Rally Blade Park 2.30pm. Spkr Mike Pentz. **Org Scottish CND 041-331 2878.**

21 APRIL EDZELL, Angus. March from US War Communications Base (cars to Edzell village for shuttle service to assembly point). Assemble 11.30am Edzell base. Rally 2.30pm Edzell Park. Spkr Bruce Kent. **Org Scottish CND, 420 Sauchiehall St, Glasgow. 041-331 2878.**

27-28 APRIL EDINBURGH 2-day Community Information Fair. 10am-5pm St. John's Church Hall, West End Princes Street. **Details: 031-225 2612/031 556 0079.**

27-29 APRIL SWINDON 'Learning from experience in a Therapeutic Community', Lower Shaw Farm. Fee: £60 Assoc. of Therapeutic Communities membs/£65 non membs. **Details & application: Jeff Roberts 01-693 4014.**

12 MAY LONDON 'Beyond Poor Images' discn. and exhibition 10.30am-1pm City University, EC1. Tickets £2/£1 unwaged from **Child Poverty Action Grp. Alan Booth, 1 Macklin St, WC2 01-242 3225.**

12-13 MAY SHEFFIELD National Women's Peace Weekend. **Details: send s.a.e. to: Sheffield Peace Shop, 51 Leopold St, S1 2GY.**

14 MAY GLASGOW Housing the Frail Elderly conf. Walton Conference suite, Southern General Hospital. **Details: Melina McGarry, Age Concern Scotland, 33 Castle Street, Edinburgh EH2 3DN. 031-225 5000/1.**

27-29 JULY NOTTINGHAM Shelter Annual Housing Conference University of Nottingham. **Details: Tim Mars, Shelter, 157 Waterloo Rd, SE1 8FX. 01-633 9377.**

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